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ABSTRACT

In 1997, the Institute for Children and Poverty of Homes for the Homeless joined with more than 58 organizations from 10 cities across the country to develop a national snapshot of family homelessness in the United States. Nearly 800 families were surveyed. This report presents the results of this research. The typical homeless family in the United States is composed of a single mother, about 30 years old, with between two and three children averaging 5 years of age. African Americans are heavily over-represented among homeless families. Rates of educational attainment among homeless parents vary by city, but in 9 of the 10 cities, homeless parents over age 25 have education levels beneath those of the general population. This disparity grows even wider when all homeless parents, regardless of age, are taken into account. While 75% of persons 25 and older in the general population have completed high school, only 68% of homeless parents 25 and older have finished high school, and only 63% of all homeless parents have completed high school. In New York, less than half (47%) of homeless parents have completed high school. Most homeless parents are currently unemployed, although 72% have some work experience. The greatest single determinant of employment for these parents is education. Employment alone, however, is no guarantee that a homeless parent can support a family. Many factors contribute to undereducation, but teen pregnancy ranks among the leading explanations. The prevalence of undereducation, unemployment, and long-term welfare dependence among homeless families is dramatic, if not surprising, given findings from previous research. Nineteen percent of homeless parents had graduated from high school or earned their General Education Diplomas. Issues of education and employment clearly lie at the roots of homelessness for many families, yet no one explanation can account for the multiple and complex routes to homelessness among families. Homeless parents understand the importance of education, with over 72% recognizing that a high school diploma is necessary for independence; but the bridge between belief and action in limited, with only 19% taking steps by participating in educational programs. Local data on homeless families are presented for each of the 10 cities studied. A discussion of secondary data sources is included. (Contains 5 figures and 11 tables.) (SLD)

TEN CITIES

1997-1998

ED 424 338

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

&

THE INSTITUTE FOR
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Leonard N. Stern
Founder

Ralph Nunez
President

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A Snapshot of

Family Homelessness Across America

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The Institute for Children and Poverty (ICP) is the research and training division of **Homes for the Homeless (HFH)**, which operates four American Family Inns in New York City. Each day these transitional housing facilities for homeless families provide education, job readiness training and support services to 530 families and over 1,000 children.

The Institute works to provide strategies to combat the impact of homelessness and urban poverty on the lives of children and their families. The Institute's four major activities include research, information dissemination, training and program development.

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Executive Summary

Families comprise the fastest growing group of the homeless across America today. The following local and national data will enable those working on behalf of homeless children and their families to assess local strategies and forge a unified national agenda in the fight to end family homelessness.

Homelessness today is a family issue, and a children's issue. Since 1988, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has reported annually that families make up the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Yet now, a decade later and nearly two decades after cities across America first started to see signs of this new poverty, there remains only scattered and fragmented information about family homelessness—focused on a single region, or a single issue. Never has there been the comprehensive research necessary to adequately inform the efforts of individuals and public and private agencies working to help families homeless today achieve stability or prevent more families from becoming homeless in the future.

It was in frustration over this lack of information that Homes for the Homeless' Institute for Children & Poverty and Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs first began to test the feasibility of a wide-scale study in 1996 with a comprehensive New York survey. Based on this, the Institute began in the fall of 1997 to contact groups across the country to launch a national snapshot of homeless families, unprecedented in geographic and demographic scope. This report presents the results of this research on homeless families from ten diverse cities across the country.

The demographics of homeless families vary by city. Attention to these individual pictures of homelessness is critical to developing effective local responses. The similarities between cities, however, are equally crucial to forming a national picture and to guiding a national response:

- The typical homeless family in the United States is composed of a single mother, about thirty years old, with between two and three children averaging five years in age.
- African Americans are heavily over-represented among homeless families—both at a national level and at every local level here examined. This over-representation is true even in cities where African Americans comprise only a small proportion of the homeless.
- Contrary to popular belief, homelessness often is *not* a brief situation for families caused by a temporary emergency. While the majority of homeless families nationally are homeless for the first time, two in five have returned to shelters at least twice.
- Rates of educational achievement among homeless parents vary by city. Yet in nine out of the ten cities examined, homeless parents age 25 or over have education levels beneath the general population. This disparity grows even wider when one takes into account all homeless parents, regardless of age.
- Although the vast majority of homeless parents are currently unemployed, 72% have work experience. Two in five, however, either have not worked in over two years or have never been employed. The single greatest determinant of employment is education.
- Employment alone in no way guarantees that a homeless parent can support his or her family. Median income among today's homeless parents in current or previous work is only $220 a week, or $11,440 a year—86% the 1997 federal poverty level for a family of three.
- 59% of homeless families receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF—formerly AFDC), and 81% have received TANF at some point. 35% have received TANF for more than two years. 29% of those who ever received TANF reported having their benefits reduced or eliminated within the six months prior to this research. Of those parents who had experienced benefit reductions, 22% said they got a job as a result. 49% said they became homeless.
- The prevalence of under-education, unemployment, and long-term welfare dependence among homeless families is dramatic, if not surprising given findings from previous research. Yet 19% of the parents interviewed had graduated from high school or earned their General Equivalency Diploma (GED); had worked within the last year; and had earned incomes above the poverty level. Issues of education and employment clearly lie at the roots of homelessness for many families. Yet no one explanation can illustrate the multiple and complex routes to homelessness among families.

With this report, we hope to arm communities with data from cities like their own with which to inform strategies and priorities in their fight against homelessness. We also hope to provide communities with a national context in which to view their individual battles so that they may work together toward a unified agenda. Perhaps most importantly, we hope to encourage critical discussion about family homelessness in America today. Toward this end, we plan to continue to gather this data on an annual basis in these and other regions, developing a longitudinal description of family homelessness.

The figures presented here represent a critical step in the fight against family homelessness. But the real picture that emerges from behind these numbers is of thousands upon thousands of homeless children nationwide. It is their welfare these numbers ultimately promote by enabling us to look closely at the capacity of homeless children and their families to move beyond homelessness. Yet these numbers can never adequately portray the reality of life for a homeless child. This is the reality of homelessness today, the reality we hope to help resign to the annals of history.

Leonard N. Stern
Founder

Ralph Nunez, Ph.D.
President and CEO

In the fall of 1997, Homes for the Homeless' Institute for Children and Poverty joined with more than 58 organizations from ten cities across the country to develop the first national snapshot of family homelessness in the United States. Nearly 800 homeless families in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Milwaukee, New York, Norman, Salem and Eugene, San Antonio, San Francisco, and South Bend were surveyed to gather information on parent and child demographics, housing histories, education, employment, and public assistance receipt.

This report provides the most comprehensive comparative data to date with which to arm those working to end family homelessness. The national, regional and local pictures of homeless families that emerge are framed by comparative local characteristics and poverty indicators, and a final discussion of welfare indicators looks ahead to the future of family homelessness. This future—and its connection to the past—will be documented in annual editions.

Findings

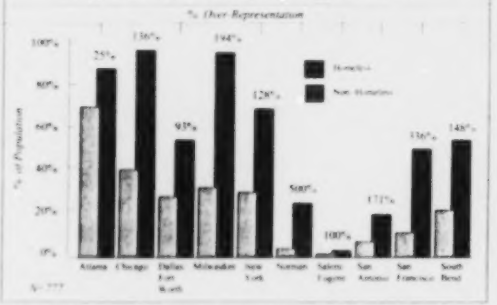
The Study

This study interviewed 777 homeless parents from ten cities across the country, representing a total of 2049 homeless children—including 1508 children in shelter, another 373 in alternate care, and another 168 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from a total of 58 facilities. 48 of these facilities provide residential services—14 emergency shelters, 19 transitional housing shelters, 4 supportive housing facilities, and 11 with some combination of the above—and 10 facilities provide non-residential services to homeless families including outreach, shelter system intake, counseling, aftercare, health and day care services.

Parent Demographics

The typical homeless family in America consists of a single mother, about thirty years old, with two or three children averaging five years old. Though less than a tenth of the homeless families surveyed fit this profile exactly, most homeless families share this general demography. To begin, the vast majority—95%—of heads of household in shelter surveyed are female.[1] Over 81% of homeless parents nationally are between 20 and 39 years old, for a median age of 29.[2] Few cities depart significantly from this national trend with one exception: in New York, the average age among parents dips to 24, with 37% between the ages of 19 and 21.

Figure 1: African Americans as a Proportion of the General Population and as a Proportion of the Homeless Family Population (with Percent Over-Representation)



African Americans are over-represented among homeless families in each of the ten cities studied. Even in Salem and Eugene where African Americans make up only 3% of the homeless population, they are still over-represented by at least 100%.

African Americans are heavily over-represented among homeless families, and whites are significantly under-represented. Over half (58%) of homeless families nationally are African American (compared to 12% in the general population), followed in frequency by whites (22% of homeless families—74% in the general population) and Latinos (15% of homeless families—10% in the general population). Indeed, African Americans make up the largest racial group in seven of the ten cities, comprise the majority of homeless families in six, and are over-represented among homeless families in all of the ten cities examined. (See Figure 1) Racial representation varies dramatically between cities. African Americans, for example, make up only 3% of homeless families in Salem and Eugene, but 92% in Chicago. The highest proportions of homeless African American families are seen in large southern, midwestern and eastern cities, the highest proportions of Latino homeless families in New York and the southwest, and

The typical homeless family consists of a single mother, about thirty years old, with two or three children averaging five years in age.

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Findings

the highest proportions of white homeless families are seen in the northwest and in smaller cities such as Norman and South Bend.

The vast majority (81%) of homeless parents across the ten cities examined are currently single. In fact, 78% of all families included are headed by single mothers; only 19% are two parent families.[3] Married parents represent the minority in every city studied, peaking at 42% in Salem and Eugene and plummeting to 5% in Milwaukee. More significant variations are evident in the marital history of those currently single. Nationally, 62% of single homeless parents have never been married, while 38% are separated, divorced or widowed. In New York, far more single parents—87%—have never married while in Norman only 30% have never married. Marital history among currently single parents also varies significantly along racial and ethnic lines: 70% of homeless African American parents and 63% of homeless Latino parents who are single have never married whereas 39% of white single homeless parents have never married.

An overwhelming majority of homeless parents are U.S. citizens.[4] In fact, only 5% of parents nationally are not U.S. citizens but rather green card holders or other legal immigrants (and only 1% identified themselves as illegal immigrants).[5] Salem and Eugene, somewhat surprisingly, have the highest rate of non-U.S. citizens at 14%. In addition, while 22% nationally are not native English speakers, only 7% identify themselves as being less than fluent in English. New York and the southwestern cities are home to more parents who are not native English speakers.

37% of families homeless today are homeless for at least the second time.

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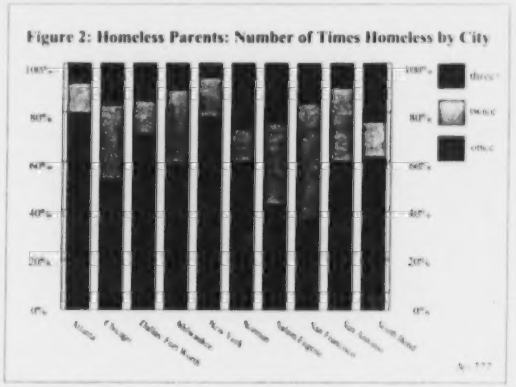
Housing

The lives of families in shelters across the country today are marked by residential instability. Homelessness is not a brief and isolated episode for many families. More than a third (37%) of homeless families nationally have been homeless more than once, with the percentage of those returning to shelter for at least the second time ranging from a low of 20% in Atlanta to a high of 63% in San Francisco. (See Figure 2) Over forty percent (42%) first experienced homelessness while still 25 or younger, and 8% became homeless before turning 18. On average these families had been homeless for eight months at the time of their interview. It also appears that many may have spent time in more than one shelter since the onset of their current bout of homelessness, as 83% had been staying at their current shelter for under six months.

Equally indicative of residential instability is the tenuous housing histories homeless families have maintained when not in the shelter system. 43% of homeless parents have never rented or owned their own residence. Locally, this rate varies from a high of 58% in New York to a low of 23% in Norman. More than two in five (44%) homeless families were living doubled- or tripled-up with family and friends prior to entering the shelter system. For most families, these arrangements did not represent stable, long-term alternatives to maintaining their own homes. Half (48%) of the homeless parents interviewed had been in their previous residence for under six months prior to becoming homeless, and only 19% had stayed in their previous home for over two years. Families who lived in their own homes before entering the shelter system tended to have lived there longer—74% stayed more than 6 months—than those whose last homes were with friends or relatives, where only 40% stayed more than 6 months.

It is interesting to note that only 4% of parents indicated that they spent time on the streets or in abandoned buildings before turning to the shelter. While many members of the public are accustomed to thinking of these as the traditional indicators of homelessness (as they frequently are among single individuals) anecdotal evidence points to the likelihood that families are more likely to avoid the streets at any cost for fear of losing their children to foster care placement. Thus, families are more likely to depend on friends or family members for long and often dangerous or uncomfortable periods before entering the shelters.



More than a third of homeless parents nationally have been homeless more than once, the percentage returning to shelter for at least a second time ranging from a low of 20% in Atlanta to a high of 63% in San Francisco

These trends toward doubled-up living arrangements and the problems that ensue are reflected in families' reasons for leaving their last residence. Over half of homeless families—56%—cited a combination of the following: a disagreement with someone else in the household (31%), domestic violence (22%) or overcrowded living quarters (19%). Only 16% of homeless families cited job loss or reductions in public assistance as a cause of their homelessness. Likewise, only 7% cited physical housing problems, such as substandard housing or a one-time emergency such as a fire.[6]

Although two parent households have been touted nationally as providing more stability for children, this research reveals evidence to the contrary. Among parents who lived with a spouse or partner, more than three-quarters (76%) left for domestic violence, overcrowding or disagreement reasons. Even more significant is the fact that domestic violence alone was cited by more than half—57%—of these homeless parents. Among

those who lived doubled- or tripled-up with friends or family, almost three-quarters (74%) cited a combination of the following: a disagreement with a member of the household (50%), overcrowding (33%), or domestic violence (13%).

Education

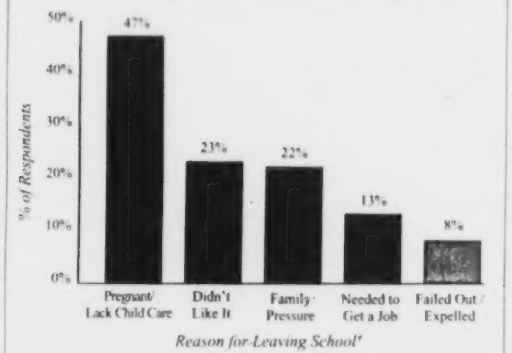
Educational achievement among homeless parents is beneath that of nationwide statistics. While 75% of persons 25 and over in the general population have completed high school, that number drops to 68% among homeless parents 25 and over. This disparity grows to 63% when one takes into account all homeless parents. While national comparative statistics only apply to individuals 25 and older, homeless parents of all ages should be included in any analysis as the responsibilities of parenthood and independence do not provide an exemption based on youth. On average, those who did not complete high school left school in the tenth grade. Locally, less than half (47%) of all parents in New York have completed high school or received their GED while parents in Atlanta and Salem/Eugene had the highest rate of matriculation at 77% and 75% respectively.

Though many factors contribute to under-education, teen pregnancy ranks among the leading explanations. More than half (53%) of homeless parents who first had children while in their teens have less than a high school education, while 72% of those who waited to have children until they were at least 19 or older have at least their high school diploma or GED. Of those parents who left school before completing twelfth grade and never earned their GED, the leading reason given for leaving school was conflict with parenthood: 47% said they left because they were pregnant or lacked child care. This was followed by two disparate explanations: family pressure, cited by 22% of parents (which might be interpreted as either lack of educational support in the household or conflicting family obligations—such as sibling care or need for extra income); and not liking school, cited by 23% of parents. An additional 13% said they needed to get a job. Only 8% said they failed out or were expelled.[1] (See Figure 3) (It is interesting to note that more than half—53%—of those who said they failed out or were expelled from school also said they left because of family pressures.) While trends in each of these areas varied dramatically by city, one trend remained constant: between 30% and 44% of homeless parents in each region said they left school due to pregnancy. In fact, pregnancy was the primary reason cited for parents' leaving school in eight out of ten cities, and the secondary cause in the remaining two cities.

Pregnancy was the primary reason for dropping out of school in eight out of ten cities, and the secondary reason in the remaining two.

While under-education is likely to present an obstacle to many homeless parents, most of the parents interviewed recognize the value of education. Over 72% of parents responded that a high school diploma or higher is necessary for independence, and 36% believe a college degree or more is the minimum. The bridge between belief and action is limited however, with only 19% currently taking steps to overcome these obstacles by participating in educational programs.

Figure 3: Homeless Parents' Reasons for Leaving School*†



* Includes only those respondents who did not earn a high school diploma or a GED. Respondents gave multiple reasons for leaving school; all percentages do not add to 100.

† The remaining categories—including fear of violence and lack of transportation—were each cited by fewer than 4% of the respondents. 14% left school for other unspecified reasons.

N=276

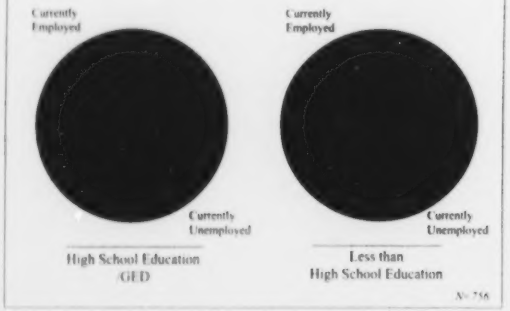
The majority of homeless parents (59%) have never graduated from high school or earned a GED. Parents most frequently cite a pregnancy and lack of child care (47%) as their reason for dropping out.

Employment/Income

Nearly four out of five (79%) homeless parents nationally are currently unemployed. While the vast majority—72%—have worked at some point in the past, more than one in four (28%) have *never* worked. Those who previously worked have been unemployed for a year on average and twelve percent have been unemployed for over two years.

The single determinant of workforce participation among homeless parents is education. A full 79% of the homeless parents who are currently employed have at least a high school education. Only 12% of those with less than a high school education are currently employed in a non-workfare job compared to 27% of homeless parents with a high school diploma. (See Figure 4) Neither marital status, race, the age of a mother when she first had children, nor even number of children seems to have an impact on work participation rates for these homeless families.

Figure 4: Homeless Families: Relationship Between Education and Employment



N=756

Though there is a high rate of unemployment among all homeless families, attainment of a high school diploma or GED increases the likelihood that a homeless parent will be employed by 125%.

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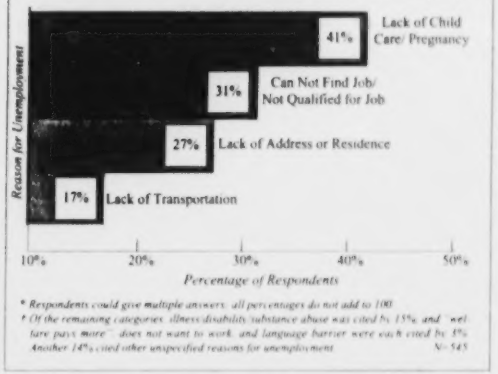
Findings

While high rates of long-term unemployment and inexperience with work are consistent across the cities studied, these rates still vary dramatically by city. The employment picture is brightest in Norman, where 30% are currently employed, only 13% have never worked and the remaining 57% have not worked for an average (median) of 5 months (and where local unemployment rates were at a low of 3.3% at the time of the survey). Employment is bleakest in New York where only 8% are currently employed, 34% have never worked, and the remaining 58% have not worked for an average of 12 months (and where local unemployment rates were at a high of 9.2% at the time of the survey).

While 79% of homeless parents nationally are currently unemployed, 72% have worked at some time in the past. 42%, however, have never worked or have not worked in over two years. 67% earned below the poverty level in current or previous jobs.

Homeless families face many barriers to employment. The leading reason cited (41%) for current unemployment by homeless parents is lack of child care or pregnancy. Indeed lack of child care or children being too young to leave in child care is the most frequently cited reason for unemployment in seven out of the ten cities, and the second or third in two of the remaining cities. The second most frequently cited cause of unemployment results from poor matches between job skills and available jobs—not being hired or not being able to find jobs to apply for (31%). The next most frequently cited reason for unemployment is a lack of address—cited by 27% of respondents.[8] Lack of transportation creates significant barriers to employment as well, ranking in the top three in seven of the ten cities, and cited by 17% of the homeless families nationally. Fifteen percent cited illness, disability or substance abuse. Only 3% said they were unemployed because welfare paid more and an equal percentage said that they simply did not want to work. (See Figure 5) The reasons for leaving previous employment are similar in percentages to those given for current unemployment with one omission: almost one-third (29%) left their last job because they were fired or laid off.[9]

Figure 5: Homeless Parents' Reasons for Current Unemployment*†

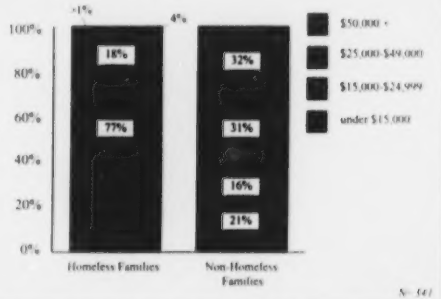


* Respondents could give multiple answers; all percentages do not add to 100.
† Of the remaining categories, illness/disability/substance abuse was cited by 15% and "welfare pays more", does not want to work, and language barrier were each cited by 3%. Another 14% cited other unspecified reasons for unemployment. N=545

The reasons most frequently cited by homeless parents for not working are a lack of child care and an inability to find appropriate employment

While these unemployment rates and histories begin to explain the circumstances that contribute to and sustain poverty and homelessness among families, work schedules and income in current and previous employment paint a fuller picture. One-third (34%) of parents currently employed are only working part time or in temporary positions, this portion rising to 71% in Chicago and 80% in New York. Unemployed parents who previously worked experienced similar rates of under-employment, with 33% having last worked only part time or in temporary employment, rising to 61% in San Francisco. Median weekly income in current and previous employment is $220. This is 86% of the federal poverty level for a family of three, which is $256.35 per week (or $13,330 per year). (See Figure 6) Among all the incomes reported (for either current or previous work), 67% were at the poverty level or under, and only 11% of parents earned over 150% of the poverty level.

Figure 6: Income Distribution: Homeless Families Compared to Non-Homeless Families



Homeless families fared far below the national average in incomes for current or previous employment. 77% of homeless families make under $15,000 per year compared to only 21% of families nationwide.

Irrespective of employment status, the vast majority (84%) of homeless families receive some sort of public assistance to support their families, and more than half (51%) cited public assistance—including TANF, food stamps, WIC, and Medicaid—as their only source of income. In particular, more than half (59%) of homeless families currently receive TANF, while the vast majority (81%) have received TANF or AFDC[10] at some point in their lives. For a few, additional sources of income include gifts (8%) and child support (8%). Strangely, 18% of those who said they receive income from work (4% of the total parents surveyed) reported that they were not currently working. One possible explanation is that they are working in an unofficial capacity in order to bring in unreported, untaxed income to support their families. Finally, it is also noteworthy that single mothers who have separated or divorced are nearly twice as likely to receive child support as women who have never married (13% and 7% respectively).

Children

While the mean number of children per family at 2.7 is slightly higher than the mean among the general population, the vast majority (77%) of homeless families have three children or fewer. Various correlations were uncovered explaining the size

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of homeless families. For obvious reasons, parents who are older tend to have more children than younger parents. Parents who were younger at the birth of their first child also tend to have more children than those who waited until they were older. (Specifically, 84% of parents had their first child when they were 25 or younger and more than half—52%—had their first child when they were 19 or younger.) Finally, parents with lower levels of education have more children than more educated parents. What is not evident from the data is whether early parenthood determines educational attainment or whether educational attainment determines a parent's number of children. Of note, 10% of the parents interviewed were currently pregnant. Dallas/ Fort Worth has the lowest percentage of pregnant homeless parents with 6%, while Atlanta has the highest at 22%.

Nearly half of children in shelter are under the age of five.

Young children are over-represented among homeless children. In fact, nearly half (48%) of all children in shelter are under age five compared to 28% of all children (under 18) nationally. While the median age for all children of the parents interviewed is seven years old, this falls to six years old when one asks for the age of children under 18, and to five years old when one asks about children under 18 in the shelter. Families in Salem and Eugene have older children in general, averaging age 7 in shelter. New York has the youngest, averaging age 4 in shelter.

The vast majority—80%—of parents' children under 18 live with their parents in shelter. Those children under 18 not living with their parent or parents are most likely staying with another relative (9%) or with their other parent (6%). An additional 3% are in foster care or kinship care, with percentages ranging from 0% in Norman and San Antonio to 14% in San Francisco.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of parents interviewed said they do not currently use child care on a regular basis. This rate varies dramatically by region, with over 55% saying they use child care in San Antonio, to under 20% reporting child care use in Chicago (19%) and Milwaukee (16%).[11] Of those who use child care, the majority (57%) say they use a child care center, followed by a relative (16%) and a paid baby-sitter (10%). While these three child care sources dominate in each city, the distribution of users among them varied dramatically. It may be likely that the type of child care used by homeless parents is dependent on child care availability within local shelters.

Those parents who do not use child care most frequently explain that they want their children to be with them (33%) or do not trust their children to strangers (34%). It is interesting that more homeless parents cite these personal reasons than any sort of availability issues. While one could speculate that substandard child care might be the reason for lack of trust in organized child care, only 3% cited substandard child care. A significant number of parents (30%) report that they are not able to afford child care but only 8% cited unavailability of child care.[12] While percentages vary by city, the relationship between affordability, wanting kids with them, and not trusting strangers rise and fall in tandem. For example, while 55% said they could not afford child care in San Antonio, 41% said they wanted their kids with them, and 27% did not trust strangers. It is interesting to note that of those who said child care was substandard, all (100%) were older than 25, 80% had completed high school, more than half (56%) were white (none were Latino), and more than half (56%) had 4 or more kids.

Conclusion

These findings illustrate life's precariousness for homeless families and, most poignantly, their children. These children have known little stability throughout their short lives, many spending time in more than one shelter, and even more living in overcrowded or dangerous doubled-up living situations—all before entering the shelters that (at their best) can provide them with the special attention so many need. Their parents, many lacking education themselves, are often unable to attend to homeless children's emotional or educational needs in the face of more pressing issues of transience, domestic violence, and survival amidst poverty. Few promising avenues to escape from this deep poverty exist for homeless parents—many of whom have been unemployed for so long that their prospects for finding work that pays a living wage, much less pulls their family out of poverty, are slim. What is more, 47% of families who already have spent over one year on TANF are at risk of losing their most reliable financial support when welfare reform's new time limits take effect. (See page 29)

While the future is unclear, the present is vivid: hundreds of thousands of children and their families across the country are trapped in lives of instability, poverty and homelessness.

Footnotes

[1] *While 29% of the families interviewed resided in facilities that said they only served women, the percent of men among heads of households rose only 1.5% when facilities with these requirements were excluded. Thus, eligibility requirements did not have a significant impact on the survey sample.*

[2] *While 7% of the families interviewed resided in facilities that did not admit parents under the age of 18, these restrictions had no effect on the mean or median age of the parent population.*

[3] *Single fathers made up the remaining 3% of this sample.*

[4] *U.S. citizen includes both native born and naturalized citizens.*

[5] *Self-reporting and the project's definition of homeless families as families in shelter likely result in an underestimation of the frequency of language and immigration issues among homeless parents. Families fearful of deportation are likely more hesitant to turn to shelters when they lack housing. They are also less likely to acknowledge any citizenship questions, even for an anonymous survey. No provisions were made within the project to ensure that fluent surveyors would be available to meet the needs of parents speaking languages other than English. Participating shelters were encouraged to make the most of their bilingual staff in completing the surveys, but it is possible that some families who did not speak English were excluded from the research.*

[6] *It should be noted that while substance abuse was not included as a category in this multiple choice question, an additional 23 respondents volunteered this information. This significant anecdotal evidence will be formally addressed in future surveys.*

[7] *Respondents could give multiple reasons for leaving school; all percentages do not add to 100.*

[8] *72% of these respondents had been unemployed before they became homeless. This might suggest that this is not the primary reason for their current unemployment.*

[9] *Respondents could select more than one reason for current unemployment and for leaving previous employment; as a result, percentages may add up to more than 100%.*

[10] *With the advent of welfare reform, the program formerly known as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) is now called TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). Both will be referred to as "TANF" throughout this report.*

[11] *53% in Atlanta also reported using child care. These responses, however, include parents drawn from one facility that is primarily a day care center. Once these responses were controlled for, the rate of child care use dropped to 38% in Atlanta.*

[12] *Respondents could give multiple reasons for not using child care frequently; all percentages do not add to 100.*

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Aggregate Data*

National Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population	
Families Surveyed	777	**Families with Children**	34,296,000
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender***	
Female	95%	Female	22%
Male	5%	Male	78%
Parent Age *(Median: 29)*		**Parent Age**	
15 - 24	30%	15 - 24	6%
25 - 34	43%	25 - 34	31%
35 - 44	24%	35 - 44	44%
≥ 45	3%	≥ 45	19%
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	58%	African American	12%
Asian	1%	Asian	3%
Latino	15%	Latino	10%
Native American	2%	Native American	<1%
White	22%	White	74%
Other	2%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married†	19%	Married	76%
Single	81%	Single	24%
Never Married	*50%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*31%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level† (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level† (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	32%	Less than High School	25%
High School or More	68%	High School or More	75%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment† (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	21%	Employed	59%
Unemployed	79%	Unemployed	41%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$11,440	**Median Annual Household Income**	$34,076
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in U.S.**	
Under 5	47%	Under 5	28%
5 - 17	53%	5 - 17	72%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	
1	26%	1	41%
2	28%	2	39%
3	23%	3	14%
≥ 4	23%	≥ 4	6%

* Numbers have been rounded; total percentages may not add to 100.
† See "Definition of Terms," page 30, for discussion of terminology.

Demographics of Homeless Families in 10 Cities

	Atlanta	Chicago	Dallas/ Fort Worth	Milwaukee	New York	Norman	Salem & Eugene	San Antonio	San Francisco	South Bend
Families Surveyed	78	76	143	101	137	30	78	63	60	21
Gender										
Female	93%	95%	93%	93%	98%	100%	91%	95%	88%	100%
Male	7%	5%	7%	7%	2%	0%	9%	5%	12%	0%
Parent Age	*Median: 29*	*Median: 29*	*Median: 30*	*Median: 29*	*Median: 24*	*Median: 34*	*Median: 31*	*Median: 27*	*Median: 35*	*Median: 31*
15 - 24	25%	30%	27%	21%	53%	17%	23%	32%	17%	19%
25 - 34	51%	50%	39%	50%	35%	38%	42%	50%	31%	52%
35 - 44	21%	17%	29%	25%	11%	42%	34%	16%	46%	29%
≥ 45	3%	3%	5%	4%	1%	3%	1%	2%	6%	0%
Race/ Ethnicity										
African American	84%	92%	52%	91%	66%	24%	3%	19%	48%	52%
Asian	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	5%
Latino	1%	3%	15%	3%	31%	10%	13%	49%	12%	0%
Native American	4%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	5%	3%	2%	5%
White	8%	4%	26%	6%	1%	60%	78%	26%	24%	38%
Other	3%	1%	3%	0%	1%	3%	1%	3%	8%	0%
Marital Status										
Married	18%	8%	22%	5%	17%	33%	42%	20%	20%	14%
Single	82%	92%	78%	95%	83%	67%	58%	80%	80%	86%
Never Married	*46%*	*64%*	*35%*	*69%*	*72%*	*20%*	*25%*	*40%*	*55%*	*43%*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*36%*	*28%*	*43%*	*26%*	*11%*	*47%*	*33%*	*40%*	*25%*	*43%*
Education Level (for Persons 25+)										
Less than H.S.	17%	40%	25%	44%	42%	25%	22%	37%	31%	35%
H.S. or More	83%	60%	75%	56%	58%	75%	78%	63%	69%	65%
Employment (for Women 16+)										
Employed	30%	22%	25%	22%	8%	31%	27%	13%	19%	29%
Unemployed	70%	78%	75%	78%	92%	69%	73%	87%	81%	71%
Median Annual Income	$13,104	$10,400	$11,440	$12,740	$10,400	$10,062	$11,440	$9,880	$14,105	$10,316
Age of Children in Shelter										
Under 5	55%	40%	44%	38%	62%	25%	30%	47%	31%	49%
5 - 17	45%	60%	56%	62%	38%	75%	70%	53%	69%	51%
Number of Children Per Family										
1	32%	14%	25%	12%	42%	27%	15%	33%	33%	29%
2	18%	23%	36%	24%	32%	40%	30%	26%	22%	24%
3	26%	24%	21%	29%	14%	17%	22%	30%	25%	28%
≥ 4	24%	39%	19%	35%	12%	16%	33%	11%	20%	19%

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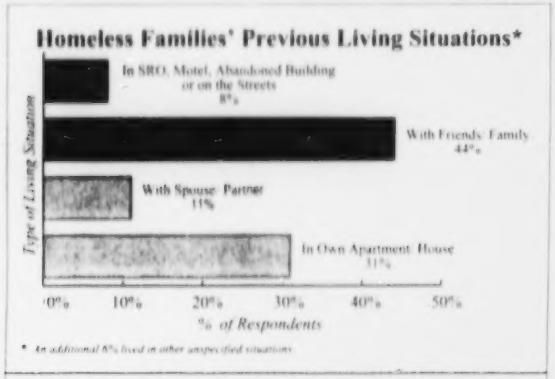

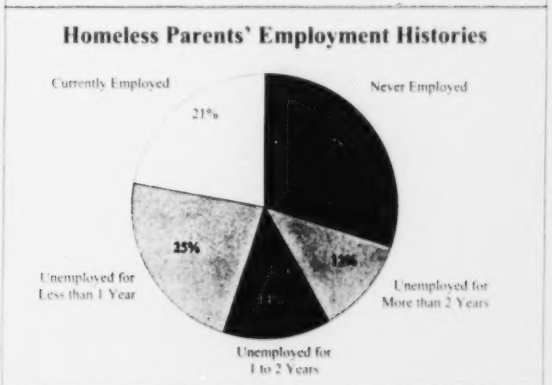

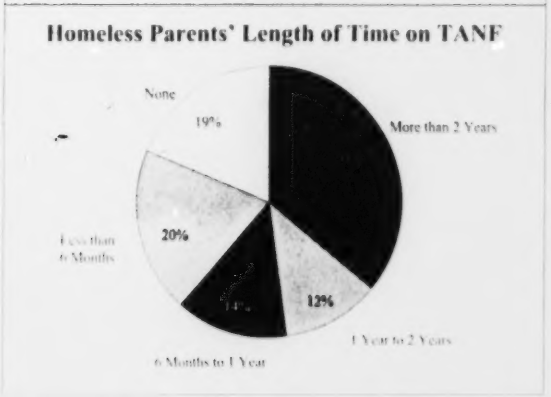

Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	63%
	Two Times	23%
	Three or More Times	14%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 27)*	< 18	8%
	18 - 25	34%
	26 - 30	22%
	> 30	36%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		57%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 8 months)*	< 1 month	12%
	1 month - 6 months	53%
	6 months - 1 year	19%
	> 1 year	16%
Why Left Last Residence†	Overcrowded	19%
	Disagreement	31%
	Domestic Violence	22%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	7%
	Lost Public Assistance	6%
	Lost Job	12%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	21%
	$150 - $250	45%
	$250 - $350	21%
	> $350	13%
Parents Currently Pregnant		10%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	24%
	18 - 25	60%
	25 - 30	10%
	> 30	6%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	80%
	With Other Parent	6%
	With Relative	9%
	Kinship or Foster Care	3%
	In Institution*	<1%
	With Adopted Family	1%
	On Own	<1%
	Other	1%

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Local Data • Atlanta, Georgia

The city of Atlanta, though only the 34th largest in the country, makes up the ninth largest metropolitan area in the nation. This metropolitan area includes, among others, the cities of Decatur and Marietta, from which 27% of the families included in the Atlanta sample were drawn. The area's (1997) unemployment rate at 3.8% is beneath the national rate of 5%. Poverty among families there, however, (according to 1990 census data—the most recent data available) is over twice the national rate of 10%, with 25% of all families living below the federal poverty line. Median rent is $422 per household, or 29% of renter income in the city. This amounts to 39% of the monthly earnings reported by homeless families.

Homeless services for families are provided by over 150 nonprofit housing and human services agencies in a non-centralized system. Leadership in homeless policy and resource planning for the metro area, however, is provided by the Homeless Action Group (HAG), a network maintained by human services and community development departments from the City of Atlanta and Fulton and DeKalb counties, in close collaboration with 83 local service agencies, religious organizations, foundations, businesses, and formerly homeless individuals. Community guidance is also provided by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, a coalition that coordinates service planning, advocacy and research, in addition to operating a 24-hour shelter hotline.

2,409 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter every night in the Atlanta Metro Area according to HAG, and 20,615 are homeless over the course of a year according to the Task Force.* By these estimates, families comprise 31% of the local homeless population on a given night, or 68% annually. Shelter is available nightly for 1,173 of these individuals in families . This survey found that the average family in shelter in Atlanta is comprised of 3.29 people, including 2.11 children. Applying this survey's findings to the City and Task Force's official counts of homelessness, one finds an estimated 732 families with 1,545 children in need of shelter nightly in Atlanta, and 6,266 families with 13,221 children homeless over the course of a year.

78 parents from Atlanta and its contiguous localities were surveyed for the purposes of this study, comprising 10% of the national sample. These families are comprised of a total of 197 children, including 137 in shelter, 52 in alternate care, and 8 over age 18. Participants were drawn from five facilities—two emergency shelters; one emergency, transitional and supportive housing facility; one daycare for children of families in shelter; and one health and daycare service site for homeless families.

Like homeless families in the other nine cities surveyed, families in Atlanta are more likely to be single than the general population in the area, more likely to be female-headed, more likely to be African American, and more likely to have younger children. They are roughly half as likely to be employed, and earn median incomes in current or previous employment only 58% that of the local median. While homeless parents in the aggregate tend to have lower educational achievement levels than the general population, homeless parents 25 and over in Atlanta are *more* likely to have earned at least a high school diploma or GED than individuals in the general population, though these numbers move somewhat closer when one looks at homeless parents regardless of age (23% did not complete high school).

The demographics of homeless families in Atlanta are representative of homeless families across the country, even in education levels. Parents in Atlanta are more likely to be African American and less likely to be white than homeless parents in the aggregate, but so are individuals in Atlanta's general population relative to the rest of the country. Children in shelter are younger in Atlanta than in shelters nationwide, with 55% under 5 compared to 47% nationally (although once children from families drawn from the two daycare centers in the Atlanta sample are excluded, that proportion falls to 44%). Families in Atlanta are more likely to be homeless for the first time—80% compared to 63% in the aggregate—and more likely to have been living in their own home prior to becoming homeless—45% versus 31% in the aggregate. Though only slightly more likely to be currently employed, parents in Atlanta have the second lowest rate of long-term welfare receipt in the ten cities, with 30% having received TANF for over one year compared to 47% in the aggregate, and 17% for over two years compared to 35% in the aggregate. Finally, Atlanta parents are likely to have been older at the birth of their first child, and more than twice as many parents in shelter are pregnant—22% versus 10% nationally.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Atlanta, Georgia:

Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. *1997 Continuum of Care Report* (Atlanta, GA: 1997).

Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative: City of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County. "The Continuum of Care for the Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Atlanta, GA: 1997).

* See "Secondary Data Sources," page 31, for sources of two homeless estimates.

Atlanta Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	78	**Population of Atlanta**	396,052
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	93%	Female	52%
Male	7%	Male	48%
Median Parent Age	29	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	84%	African American	67%
Asian	0%	Asian	1%
Latino	1%	Latino	2%
Native American	4%	Native American	<1%
White	8%	White	30%
Other	3%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	18%	Married	43%
Single	82%	Single	57%
Never Married	*46%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*36%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	17%	Less than High School	30%
High School or More	83%	High School or More	70%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	30%	Employed	57%
Unemployed	70%	Unemployed	43%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$13,000	**Median Annual Household Income**	$22,275
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	55%	Under 5	32%
5 - 17	45%	5 - 17	68%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	32%		
2	18%		
3	26%		
≥ 4	24%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of Atlanta.

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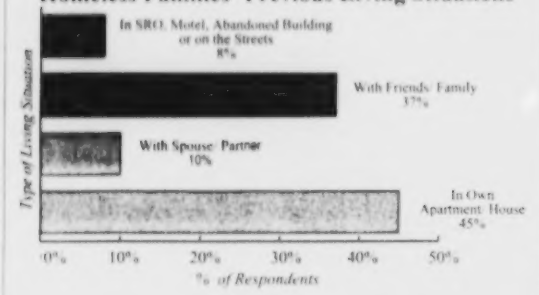
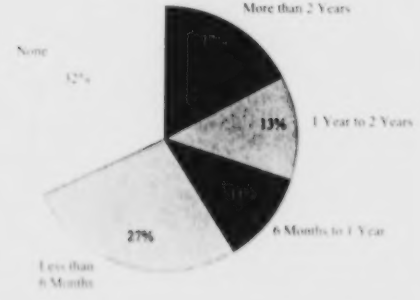
Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations



Homeless Parents' Employment Histories

Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	80%
	Two Times	12%
	Three or More Times	8%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 27)*	< 18	7%
	18 - 25	30%
	26 - 30	25%
	> 30	38%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		73%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 6 months)*	< 1 month	19%
	1 month - 6 months	60%
	6 months - 1 year	11%
	> 1 year	10%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	15%
	Disagreement	27%
	Domestic Violence	25%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	4%
	Lost Public Assistance	5%
	Lost Job	7%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	9%
	$150 - $250	41%
	$250 - $350	30%
	> $350	20%
Parents Currently Pregnant		22%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	16%
	18 - 25	59%
	25 - 30	15%
	> 30	10%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	75%
	With Other Parent	9%
	With Relative	11%
	Kinship or Foster Care	4%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	0%
	On Own	0%
	Other	1%

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Local Data • Chicago, Illinois

The city of Chicago in Illinois is the third largest city in the United States, home to over 2.7 million people, and the core of the country's third largest metropolitan region. Unemployment in the metro area is 4.9%, only slightly beneath the national rate of 5%. Poverty among families, however, is nearly double the national rate at 18.3%. Median rents in the city come to $445—27% of renter income, and 51% the median income of homeless families.

Homeless services in Chicago are coordinated through the Chicago Task Force on Homelessness under the City's Department of Human Services (CDHS). Outreach, assessment and shelter placement in the city are organized centrally through CDHS in collaboration with local nonprofits. Two Family Assessment Centers provide needs assessment and shelter placement for all women with children seeking shelter. Chicago's shelter system, run by private nonprofit agencies with public, corporate and private funding, provides homeless families with emergency and transitional housing, as well as non-residential Supportive Service Centers and permanent supportive housing.

2,686 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter nightly in Chicago, comprising 36% of the City's homeless population. Applying this survey's finding that the average family in shelter in Chicago consists of 3.81 people (including 2.73 children), an estimated 705 families are homeless nightly, with 1,925 children. According to the City, shelter is available for 83% of homeless families.

This study interviewed 76 parents from Chicago, comprising 10% of the national sample. These families are comprised of 249 children, including 192 children in shelter, 45 children in alternate care, and 12 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from eight facilities throughout the city, including one emergency shelter, six transitional shelters, and one supportive housing facility.

While African Americans comprise 39% of the city's general population, they account for 92% of homeless families—an over-representation of 136%. Parents in shelters also are less likely to have graduated from high school or earned their GED than parents in the general population—60% among homeless parents over 25 and 58% among homeless parents overall, compared to 66% among the general population. Homeless mothers are less than half as likely to be employed as women generally, and parents in shelters earn or used to earn a median annual income only 40% of the regional median.

These differences between homeless families and the general population in Chicago are similar to those between homeless parents and the general population in most of the cities studied. The demographics of homeless parents in Chicago, however, are at the extreme end of the demographics of homeless parents in the aggregate. Chicago has the highest proportion of African Americans among its homeless, over 1.5 times the aggregate 58%. It also has one of the lowest rates of marriage, exceeded only by Milwaukee's 5%. Families in Chicago tend to be larger than homeless families in the aggregate, with 63% of families having three or more children, compared to 46% in the aggregate. Finally, homeless parents in Chicago, while maintaining employment histories similar to those at the national level, have spent more time on average on TANF, with 50% having received welfare for more than two years, compared to 35% in the aggregate.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Chicago, Illinois:

City of Chicago. "Consolidated 1998 Action Plan." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Chicago, IL: 1997).
Ross, P.H. *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness.* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 1997* (Washington, DC: 1997).

Chicago Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	76	**Population of Chicago**	2,731,743
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	95%	Female	36%
Male	5%	Male	64%
Median Parent Age	29	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	92%	African American	39%
Asian	0%	Asian	4%
Latino	3%	Latino	20%
Native American	0%	Native American	<1%
White	4%	White	37%
Other	1%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	8%	Married	59%
Single	92%	Single	41%
Never Married	*64%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*28%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	40%	Less than High School	34%
High School or More	60%	High School or More	66%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	22%	Employed	56%
Unemployed	78%	Unemployed	44%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$10,400	**Median Annual Household Income**	$26,301
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	40%	Under 5	30%
5 - 17	60%	5 - 17	70%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	14%		
2	23%		
3	24%		
≥ 4	39%		

* *Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of Chicago.*

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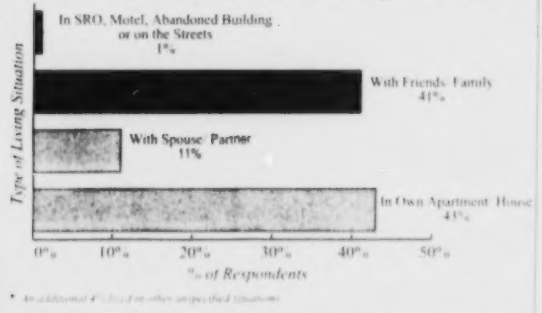
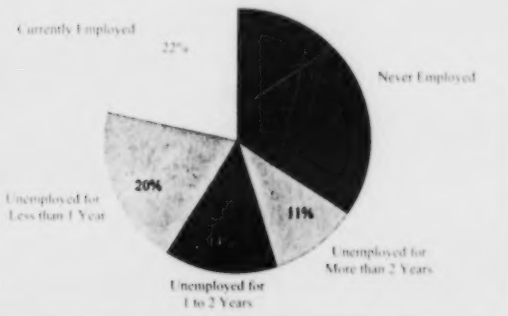
Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*

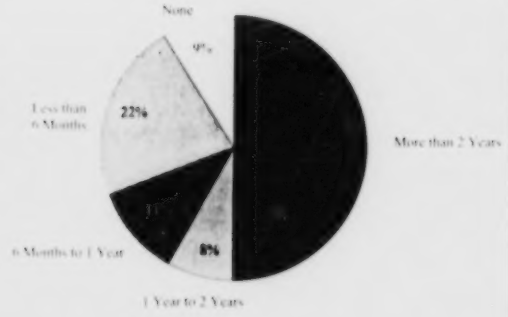


* An additional 4% lived in other unspecified situations

Homeless Parents' Employment Histories



Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	53%
	Two Times	30%
	Three or More Times	17%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 28)*	< 18	13%
	18 - 25	29%
	26 - 30	20%
	> 30	38%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		65%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 6 months)*	< 1 month	8%
	1 month - 6 months	61%
	6 months - 1 year	23%
	> 1 year	8%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	21%
	Disagreement	30%
	Domestic Violence	22%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	5%
	Lost Public Assistance	7%
	Lost Job	10%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	27%
	$150 - $250	44%
	$250 - $350	22%
	> $350	7%
Parents Currently Pregnant		13%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	33%
	18 - 25	56%
	25 - 30	8%
	> 30	3%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	84%
	With Other Parent	4%
	With Relative	10%
	Kinship or Foster Care	1%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	<1%
	On Own	0%
	Other	<1%

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Local Data • Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

The city of Dallas is the eighth largest in the country, the metropolitan area surrounding it the tenth. Its close neighbor, Fort Worth in Tarrant County, is roughly half the size of Dallas and the Dallas metro region. Together, these two regions form a Comprehensive Metropolitan Statistical Area home to nearly 4.5 million people. The two areas approximate each other in unemployment, with a 3.8% rate in Dallas and a 3.7% rate in Fort Worth. Poverty rates also are similar, with 14.7% of families living below the federal poverty line in Dallas, and 13.6% in Fort Worth. Median rent within the two cities runs to $415, or 26% of renter income. Rent payments of this amount, however, would comprise 44% of the monthly income reported by homeless families.

The Dallas and Fort Worth regions each maintain distinct systems of homeless service provision. Services for homeless families in the city of Dallas are independent of those for families in the metropolitan area outside the city's borders. Dallas services are decentralized, provided by a combination of private nonprofit service and religious agencies, as well as the City of Dallas itself, with the City taking primary responsibility for policy coordination. Supplemental support in service planning is provided by the Dallas Association of Services to the Homeless (DASH), a coalition composed of service providers who share information and provide advocacy for the homeless. Fourteen emergency and transitional facilities provide shelter to families throughout Dallas, and an additional two offer shelter for victims of domestic violence. Services in Fort Worth and the rest of Tarrant County are together considered in planning for the area, though services themselves are again decentralized. Homeless trends and responses are most closely monitored by the Tarrant County Coalition for the Homeless. Five family and two domestic violence shelters are located in Tarrant County—more than half in the city of Fort Worth itself.

According to a recent survey by the Tarrant County Coalition for the Homeless, an estimated 430 families with 529 children are homeless on a given day throughout the County, comprising 1068 individuals, or 49% of the total homeless population. In Dallas, the City estimates that 780 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter daily, comprising 31% of the homeless population. Applying to these official numbers this survey's findings that the average family in shelter in Dallas includes 3.21 individuals (1.99 children), an estimated 243 families with 484 children are homeless daily in the city.

This survey interviewed 143 homeless parents from Dallas/ Fort Worth (114 from Dallas and 29 from Fort Worth), making up 18% of the aggregate sample. These families are comprised of 356 children, including 252 children in shelter, another 77 in alternate care, and 27 over age 18. Families were drawn from nine residential facilities—seven from Dallas and two from Fort Worth—which provide emergency, transitional and supportive housing services, as well as substance abuse treatment at one site and domestic violence services at two others.

Homeless parents from Dallas/Fort Worth are more likely to be African American than individuals in the general population in this area, more likely to be single, and more likely to be unemployed. Homeless parents also are likely to have younger children, and median annual incomes in current or previous employment just 35% that of the general population. Far more parents interviewed in shelter were female than one would find in the general population. Unlike in the majority of the other cities studied, there is no significant difference between the education levels of homeless parents and those of the general population in Dallas/Fort Worth, even when levels among the homeless are controlled by age.

Basic demographics among homeless families in Dallas/Fort Worth are similar to those among the aggregate homeless population. Racial breakdowns match almost precisely. Homeless parents in Dallas/Fort Worth are 8% more likely to have completed high school than parents in the aggregate. Parents in Dallas/Fort Worth are 10% more likely to report domestic violence as their reason for leaving their previous residence, though the percent reporting domestic violence drops to 19%—slightly below the aggregate—when the 25 families residing at domestic violence shelters are excluded. Families are slightly more likely to be homeless for the first time, and to have been older when they did become homeless, with 45% first homeless over age 30 compared to 36% nationally. While employment histories do not differ significantly between Dallas/Fort Worth parents and those in the aggregate, homeless families in Dallas/Fort Worth have the lowest rate of long-term welfare dependence among the ten cities examined, with only 28% receiving TANF for over one year (compared to 47% nationally), and 16% receiving for more than two years (compared to 35% nationally).

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas:

Tarrant County and the City of Fort Worth. "Continuum of Care Plan to Break the Cycle of Homelessness, for Fort Worth and Tarrant County." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Fort Worth, TX: 1997).
Tarrant County Homeless Coalition. "Tarrant County Homeless Survey" (Fort Worth, TX: 1997).
City of Dallas. "Continuum of Care Narrative." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Dallas, TX: 1997).

Dallas/Fort Worth Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	143	**Population of Metropolitan Area**	4,449,875
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	93%	Female	18%
Male	7%	Male	82%
Median Parent Age	30	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity†**	
African American	52%	African American	27%
Asian	3%	Asian	2%
Latino	15%	Latino	21%
Native American	1%	Native American	<1%
White	26%	White	50%
Other	3%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	22%	Married	69%
Single	78%	Single	31%
Never Married	*35%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*43%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	25%	Less than High School	21%
High School or More	75%	High School or More	79%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment††**	
		(for Women 16 and Over)	
Employed	25%	Employed	65%
Unemployed	75%	Unemployed	35%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$11,440	**Median Annual Household Income**	$32,481
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	44%	Under 5	32%
5 - 17	56%	5 - 17	68%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	25%		
2	36%		
3	21%		
≥ 4	19%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the Dallas Fort Worth Comprehensive Metropolitan Area.
† Data for combined populations of the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth.
†† Data for Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant Counties.

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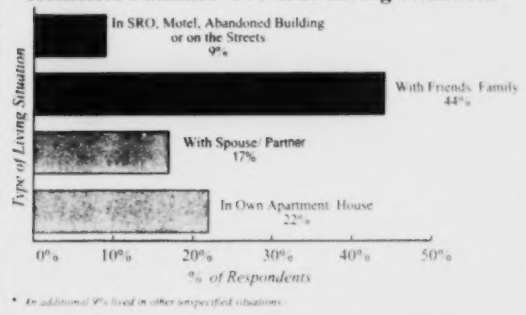
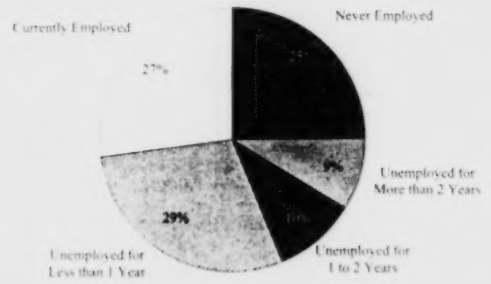
Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*

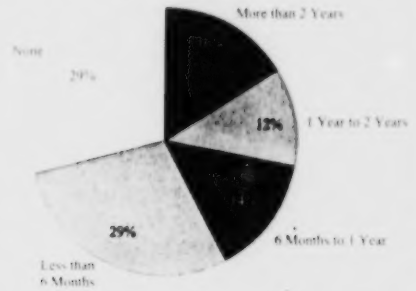


* An additional 8% lived in other unspecified situations

Homeless Parents' Employment Histories



Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	71%
	Two Times	13%
	Three or More Times	16%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 29)*	< 18	8%
	18 - 25	31%
	26 - 30	16%
	> 30	45%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		54%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 9 months)*	< 1 month	10%
	1 month - 6 months	55%
	6 months - 1 year	18%
	> 1 year	17%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	20%
	Disagreement	32%
	Domestic Violence	32%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	3%
	Lost Public Assistance	6%
	Lost Job	17%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	19%
	$150 - $250	42%
	$250 - $350	23%
	> $350	16%
Parents Currently Pregnant		6%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	21%
	18 - 25	61%
	25 - 30	11%
	> 30	7%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	77%
	With Other Parent	7%
	With Relative	12%
	Kinship or Foster Care	1%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	2%
	On Own	1%
	Other	0%

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Local Data • Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the fifteenth largest city in the country. The city and its surrounding region, making up the Milwaukee-Waukesha metropolitan area, is home to almost 1.5 million people, and ranks 37th in size across the country. The area's unemployment rate is lower than the national level at 3.8%. The rate of poverty among families in the city, however, is 185% of the national rate, with 18.5% of all Milwaukee families living below the poverty line. Median rents in the city amount to $418, or 28% of renter income. This rent amounts to 39% of the median income reported by homeless parents.

Nonprofit service agencies, through the Emergency Shelter Task Force, have established a centralized service system for the city of Milwaukee, provided entirely by nonprofit organizations. An emergency hotline offers telephone intervention, assessment and referral to shelter or services, all of which is recorded in the central "SHELTER" database system, developed to meet the specific needs of the region. Seven emergency, four transitional, and two supportive housing facilities are available to meet the needs of homeless families.

1,844 individuals in families need emergency or transitional shelter daily across Milwaukee County, comprising 35% of the area's homeless population. These individuals make up 614 families, according to the County, with 1106 children.

101 homeless parents participated in surveys in Milwaukee, comprising 13% of the national sample in this research. Milwaukee families include a total of 321 children—242 in shelter, 56 in alternate care, and 23 over age 18. The families interviewed were residing at two emergency shelters and two facilities providing emergency and transitional housing.

Homeless families in Milwaukee, while following the same trends as those in other areas, are the least representative of the general population locally relative to the other nine cities studied. Homeless families in Milwaukee are more than twice as likely to be headed by females as households in the general population. African Americans are over-represented by nearly 200% among the homeless, up from 31% in the general population to 91% in the shelters. Only 5% are married compared to 55% in the general population. Forty-four percent of homeless parents over 25 have never completed high school, and that number rises to almost half (48%) among all homeless parents, regardless of age. Less than one quarter (22%) are currently employed, and median annual income is only 54% that of the median city-wide. In fact, homeless families are representative of the general population in Milwaukee in only one respect: the proportion of children under age five is roughly equivalent between shelters and throughout the general population, at 38% and 31% under age 5 respectively.

The demographics of homeless families in Milwaukee, unrepresentative of the general population there, are equally extreme relative to the aggregate homeless population. Milwaukee rivals Chicago for the highest portion of African Americans among its homeless, and surpasses it in over-representation relative to the local general population. Milwaukee is also home to the lowest marriage rate of any of the ten cities, Chicago following most closely at 8%. The only city with a lower rate of educational achievement than Milwaukee is New York, where 53% of all parents and 42% of parents over 25, did not complete school or earn a GED. Ironically, median annual incomes in Milwaukee are $1,300 (11%) *higher* than the median for all homeless parents surveyed, even though the median income in the general population in Milwaukee is only 69% of the national median income. Finally, while employment histories do not vary significantly from the aggregate, Milwaukee parents have spent by far the most time on TANF at 68% over one year and 54% over two years.

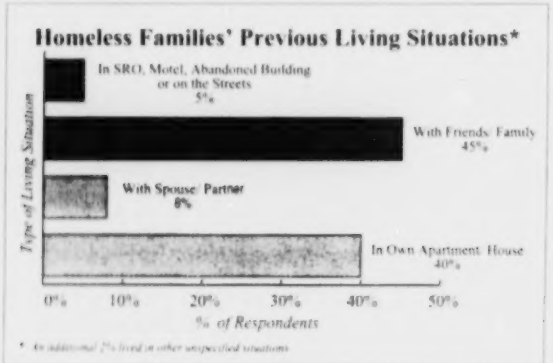
Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Milwaukee, Wisconsin:

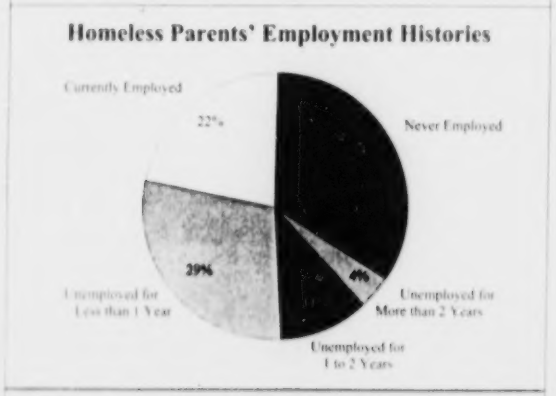
City and County of Milwaukee. "A Continuum of Care Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness in Milwaukee." Report to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Milwaukee, WI: 1997).

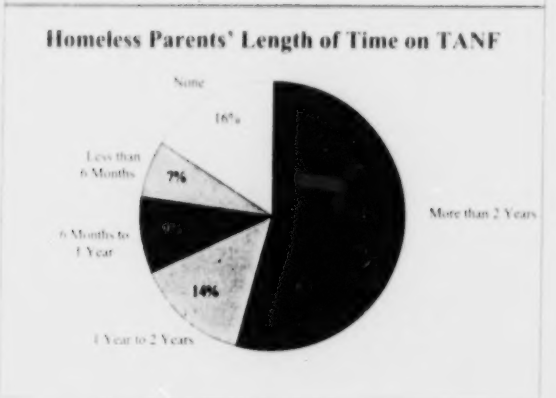
Milwaukee Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	101	**Pop. of Milwaukee**	617,044
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	95%	Female	41%
Male	5%	Male	59%
Median Parent Age	29	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	91%	African American	31%
Asian	0%	Asian	2%
Latino	3%	Latino	6%
Native American	0%	Native American	1%
White	6%	White	60%
Other	0%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	5%	Married	55%
Single	95%	Single	45%
Never Married	*69%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*26%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	44%	Less than High School	28%
High School or More	56%	High School or More	72%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	22%	Employed	58%
Unemployed	78%	Unemployed	42%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$12,740	**Median Annual Household Income**	$23,627
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	38%	Under 5	31%
5 - 17	62%	5 - 17	69%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	12%		
2	24%		
3	29%		
≥ 4	35%		

* *Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of Milwaukee.*







Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	59%
	Two Times	30%
	Three or More Times	11%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 29)*	< 18	1%
	18 - 25	31%
	26 - 30	27%
	> 30	41%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		56%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 5 months)*	< 1 month	33%
	1 month - 6 months	53%
	6 months - 1 year	8%
	> 1 year	6%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	9%
	Disagreement	37%
	Domestic Violence	12%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	10%
	Lost Public Assistance	14%
	Lost Job	12%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	15%
	$150 - $250	48%
	$250 - $350	30%
	> $350	7%
Parents Currently Pregnant		8%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	32%
	18 - 25	55%
	25 - 30	11%
	> 30	2%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	81%
	With Other Parent	4%
	With Relative	9%
	Kinship or Foster Care	2%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	0%
	On Own	<1%
	Other	4%

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Local Data • New York, New York

New York City, the largest city in the United States, is home to roughly 7.3 million people, and makes up the second largest metropolitan area in the country. The area's 9.2% unemployment rate is the highest of the ten regions examined, 184% the national rate. Poverty among families in the area, however, while 163% the national rate, is only the fourth highest among the ten cities , with 16.3% of families living below the federal poverty line. Median rent in New York is $496—28% of renter income. This rent requirement, however, would take up 57% of the median income reported by homeless families.

The system of shelter and service provision for homeless families in New York City is distinct from that for homeless individuals, coordinated centrally through New York City's Department of Homeless Services. While the City itself has long been responsible for providing much shelter for homeless families, private nonprofits have always provided a vast portion as well, and are increasingly becoming the primary providers of shelter and services with funding from the city. Emergency shelters have been phased out of the family shelter system in New York, which now includes 3 assessment centers, 79 transitional shelters, 4 supportive housing facilities, 15 commercial hotels and 4 domestic violence shelters serving families.

According to the Department of Homeless Services, 5,500 families are in need of shelter from the City each day. Applying to the City's count this survey's findings that the average family in shelter in New York consists of 2.87 people (with 1.7 children), an estimated 15,785 individuals in families, including 9,350 children, are homeless every day. As 8,850 single individuals also are homeless daily, according to the City, families comprise 64% of New York's homeless population.

137 family heads were interviewed in New York City, comprising 18% of the national sample. These families consist of 281 children, including 211 in shelter, 55 in alternate care, and 15 over age 18. Participating families came from two transitional housing facilities.*

Homeless families in New York differ from the general population in the city in the same ways homeless families in other cities differ from their local populations. Women are dramatically over-represented among heads-of-household at 98%, as are African Americans (66% compared to 29% in the general population). Latinos in New York also are over-represented among the homeless at 31%, versus 24% in the general population. Homeless parents in New York are twice as likely to be single as parents throughout the city and at least 10% less likely to have completed school. Only 8% of homeless mothers over 16 are employed, compared to 54% regionally, and children in shelters are much younger than in the general population—62% under age 5 compared to 30% in the general population. Median income in current or previous employment among homeless parents is only 35% that of the local median.

While New York homeless parents are generally representative of homeless parents across the country, several demographics tend toward the extreme. The median age among parents drops from 29 in the aggregate to 24 in New York; indeed, while only 30% of homeless parents nationally are under 25, that proportion rises to 53% in New York. While a similar portion of New York homeless families are African American relative to national racial breakdowns, over-representation of African Americans among the homeless is not nearly so dramatic in New York at 128% over-representation compared to 383% in the aggregate. Parents in New York are less likely to have completed high school than homeless parents nationally, though the difference in educational achievement between homeless adults and adults in each general population is the same. New York parents are far less likely to be employed (8%) than other homeless parents (21%). When employed, however, they earn 91% of the median income earned by homeless parents in the aggregate. A higher proportion of homeless children are under the age of 5 in New York, and families tend to have fewer children than elsewhere in the country, with 42% having only one. Homeless parents in New York are more likely to be homeless for the first time, but also more likely to have first experienced homelessness at a young age, with 60% first homeless while 25 or under. Families are 19% more likely to have been living doubled-up before entering the shelters. New York parents also have less recent employment experience—51% unemployed for more than 2 years or never employed, versus 40% in the aggregate—and have spent more time on TANF than homeless families nationally—59% over one year versus 47% nationally. Finally, while 19% of parents in the aggregate never received TANF, only 5% of homeless parents in New York have never been on welfare.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in New York, New York:

Institute for Children & Poverty and Columbia University. *Homeless Families Today: Our Challenge Tomorrow* (New York, NY: 1998).

Knickman, J.R., Weitzman, B.C., Shinn, M. and Marcus, E.H., *A Study of Homeless Families in New York City: Characteristics and Comparisons with Other Public Assistance Families* (New York, NY: New York University, 1989).

Way Home Coalition. "New York City: The Way Home." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (New York, NY: 1997).

* The low number of facilities from which families were drawn relative to the total number of facilities throughout the city may have had some impact on the final findings from New York. Findings from this research, however, match almost exactly earlier findings from research on homeless families residing in 14 shelters throughout the area. The only exception is in trends in gender, which rose from 89% female in the 14 shelter study to 98% female in the 10 cities research.

New York Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	137	**Pop. of New York**	7,333,253
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	98%	Female	33%
Male	2%	Male	67%
Median Parent Age	24	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	66%	African American	29%
Asian	0%	Asian	7%
Latino	31%	Latino	24%
Native American	1%	Native American	<1%
White	1%	White	40%
Other	2%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	17%	Married	62%
Single	83%	Single	38%
Never Married	*72%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*11%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	42%	Less than High School	32%
High School or More	58%	High School or More	68%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	8%	Employed	54%
Unemployed	92%	Unemployed	46%
Median Annual Household Income (Current /Previous Employment)	$10,400	**Median Annual Household Income**	$29,823
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	62%	Under 5	30%
5 - 17	38%	5 - 17	70%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	42%		
2	32%		
3	14%		
≥ 4	12%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of New York.

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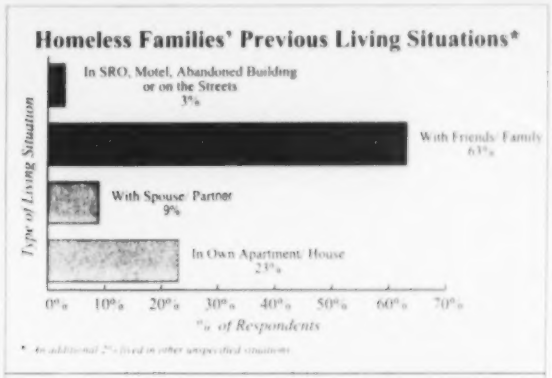
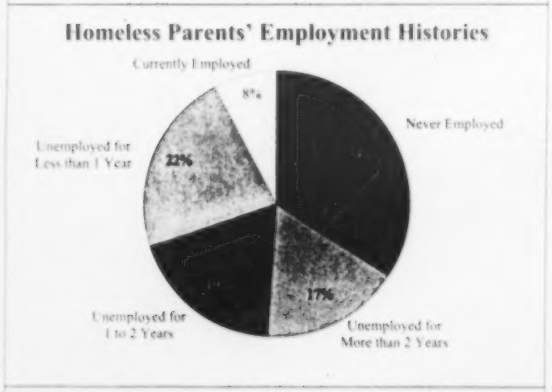
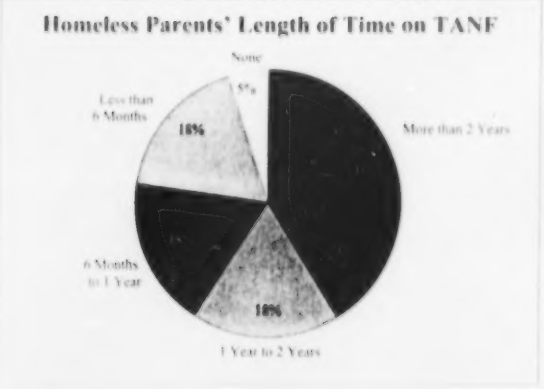

Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*
In SRO, Motel, Abandoned Building or on the Streets 3%
With Friends/ Family 63%
With Spouse/ Partner 9%
In Own Apartment/ House 23%
Type of Living Situation
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
% of Respondents


Homeless Parents' Employment Histories
Currently Employed 8%
Never Employed
Unemployed for Less than 1 Year 22%
Unemployed for 1 to 2 Years 17%
Unemployed for More than 2 Years



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	78%
	Two Times	16%
	Three or More Times	6%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 23)*	< 18	7%
	18 - 25	53%
	26 - 30	21%
	> 30	19%
Leased or Owned Own Home at Some Point in the Past		42%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 11 months)*	< 1 month	0%
	1 month - 6 months	44%
	6 months - 1 year	32%
	> 1 year	24%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	28%
	Disagreement	34%
	Domestic Violence	21%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	6%
	Lost Public Assistance	2%
	Lost Job	4%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	27%
	$150 - $250	39%
	$250 - $350	16%
	> $350	18%
Parents Currently Pregnant		10%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	29%
	18 - 25	62%
	25 - 30	6%
	> 30	3%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	80%
	With Other Parent	3%
	With Relative	8%
	Kinship or Foster Care	8%
	In Institution	1%
	With Adopted Family	0%
	On Own	0%
	Other	<1%

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Local Data • Norman, Oklahoma

Norman, Oklahoma, is the smallest city included in this study, with a population of approximately 87 thousand.* Norman is, however, part of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, the 55th largest metro area in the country and home to over one million people. The metro area has the second lowest unemployment rate among the ten cities at 3.3%, or two-thirds the national rate, as well as the lowest rate of poverty among families, at 8.2%. Renters in Norman also face the lowest housing costs of these ten cities, at a median of $362—29% of renter income in the area, but 43% the median income reported by homeless parents.

Though a decentralized system, homeless services and shelter for families are coordinated by the Social Services Coordinating Council and the larger Homeless Here Coalition (HHC), both active networks of nonprofit homeless service providers. Homeless services also receive supplemental financial and planning support from the City of Norman. A help line makes referrals for individuals in need of shelter or services throughout the city. Three facilities in the city provide emergency and transitional shelter for homeless families, and another shelters battered women.

90 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter each night in Norman (33% of the city's daily homeless population), for whom 36 beds are available. Applying this survey's findings that the average family in shelter in Norman is composed of 3.3 people (including 1.97 children), there are an estimated 27 families homeless in Norman daily, including 53 children.

30 homeless parents were interviewed from the city of Norman, comprising 4% of the national sample. These families are comprised of 73 children, including 49 in shelter, another 18 in alternate care, and 6 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from five facilities. One of these provides transitional housing; one supportive housing; one emergency shelter; and one emergency and transitional shelter as well as a soup kitchen. The fifth facility is non-residential, providing health services to homeless families and individuals in the area.

The demographics of homeless families in Norman follow the same trends relative to the general population as in other cities, with a few exceptions. African Americans are once again over-represented among homeless families—this time by 500%. Homeless adults over 25 are nearly twice as likely to have left high school without graduating as individuals in Norman's general population, and the difference expands by 8% when one includes all homeless parents regardless of age. Homeless mothers are half as likely to be currently employed as women citywide, and median annual incomes in current or previous employment equal only 40% of the local median.

Homeless families in Norman differ from homeless families in the aggregate in ways that reflect the difference in demographics of the general population in Norman compared to individuals nationally. Homeless parents in Norman are more likely to have completed high school than homeless parents nationally, but the difference in educational achievement between homeless parents in the city and the general population is nearly the same as that between homeless parents in the aggregate and national demographics. Mothers in Norman are more likely to be employed than homeless parents nationally, but, again, so are women in the general population there. The median income among homeless families is 88% of the median in the aggregate, but the median among Norman's general population is 74% of the national median. Homeless families in Norman move further away from national trends in other respects. Homeless parents there are on average five years older than homeless parents nationwide—younger only than parents in San Francisco, who averaged 35 years of age; are likely to have been older when they first became homeless; and are much more likely to have older children, with 75% of children in shelter age 5 or over. Parents in Norman have a much stronger employment history than those in the aggregate, with only 23% never employed or unemployed for over two years (versus 40%). Interestingly, while Norman has the highest portion of parents who never received TANF (40% vs. 19% in the aggregate), there is little difference in the number of parents who have received TANF for long periods of time (46% for over one year in Norman vs. 47% in the aggregate).

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Norman, Oklahoma:

City of Norman. "Communities 2020 Supplement: 1997 Homeless Program." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Norman, OK: 1997).
Governor's Advisory Committee on the Homeless. *Homelessness in Oklahoma: Statewide Survey of the Homeless Population.* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Department of Human Services, 1997).

* Marietta and Decatur, Georgia, as well as Springfield, Oregon, have smaller populations, but data for these cities is grouped with that for the major cities in their region.

Norman Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	30	**Population of Norman**	87,290
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	100%	Female	18%
Male	0%	Male	82%
Median Parent Age	34	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	24%	African American	4%
Asian	0%	Asian	3%
Latino	10%	Latino	NA†
Native American	3%	Native American	5%
White	60%	White	88%
Other	3%	Other	1%
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	33%	Married	79%
Single	67%	Single	21%
Never Married	*20%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*47%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	25%	Less than High School	13%
High School or More	75%	High School or More	87%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	31%	Employed	63%
Unemployed	69%	Unemployed	37%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$10,062	**Median Annual Household Income**	$25,165
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	25%	Under 5	29%
5 - 17	75%	5 - 17	71%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	27%		
2	40%		
3	17%		
≥ 4	16%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of Norman.
† Data is available only by race, without regard for individual or ancestral origin. Thus data for the Latino population is not available.

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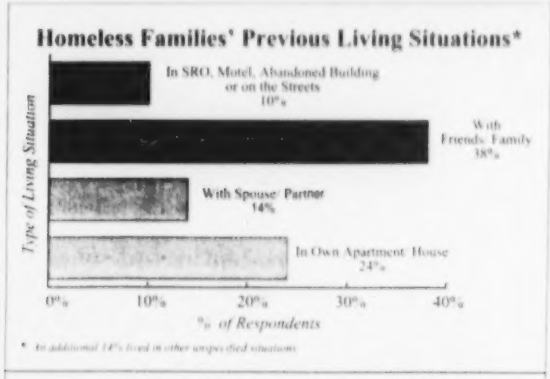

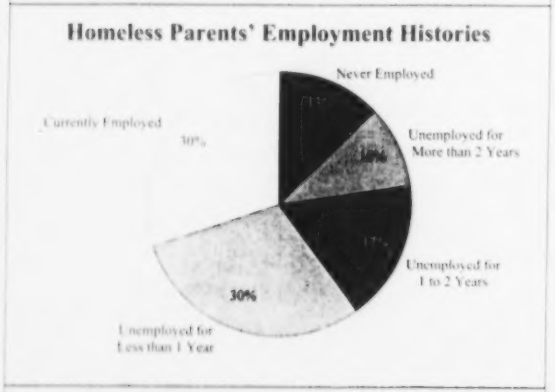

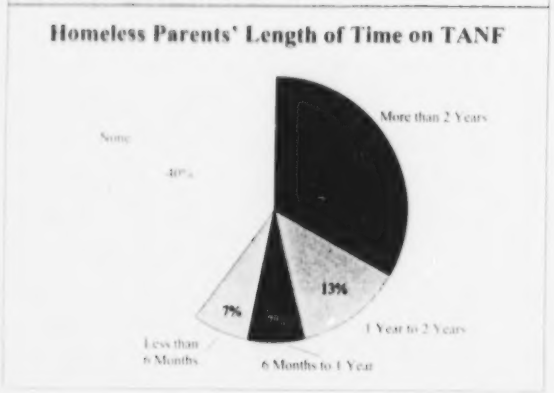

Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	60%
	Two Times	13%
	Three or More Times	27%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 31)*	< 18	3%
	18 - 25	30%
	26 - 30	17%
	> 30	50%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		77%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 9 months)*	< 1 month	11%
	1 month - 6 months	58%
	6 months - 1 year	8%
	> 1 year	23%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	7%
	Disagreement	21%
	Domestic Violence	28%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	17%
	Lost Public Assistance	0%
	Lost Job	28%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	27%
	$150 - $250	54%
	$250 - $350	8%
	> $350	11%
Parents Currently Pregnant		7%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	17%
	18 - 25	56%
	25 - 30	10%
	> 30	17%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	73%
	With Other Parent	14%
	With Relative	8%
	Kinship or Foster Care	0%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	4%
	On Own	1%
	Other	0%

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Local Data • Salem and Eugene, Oregon

Salem and Eugene, Oregon, while not in immediate proximity to each other, are two of the largest cities in the state of Oregon. The populations of each city are similar in both size and demographics, neither ranking higher in size than 151st nationally. Indeed, even combining the populations of Salem and Eugene still leaves them the third smallest area in this study. Poverty and unemployment rates within the two metro areas are similar, with an unemployment rate of 7.2% in Salem and 7% in Eugene—the second highest unemployment rate in this study after New York—and 10.5% and 9% of families living below the poverty level in each city, respectively. More variation is apparent in median rents—$387 in Salem and $425 in Eugene. These rents consume 26% and 31% of renter income in each city respectively, and 41% and 45% of median income among homeless families.

Homeless shelter services in Salem are provided entirely by nonprofit agencies. Five facilities provide emergency and transitional shelter for families in Salem, in addition to a large residential hotel with 93 rooms. Services in Eugene also are primarily provided by nonprofits in a non-centralized system, although community-wide service planning is coordinated through the Human Services Fund of the cities of Eugene and nearby Springfield, as well as Lane County.

According to the City of Salem, 60 families, including 208 individuals, need shelter on a nightly basis, comprising 34% of the homeless population. Forty-five of these families (160) people receive the shelter they need. Applying this survey's findings that the average homeless family in Salem or Eugene has 2.53 children with them in shelter, one can estimate that there are 152 children homeless nightly in the City of Salem. In the Eugene area, on the other hand, 931 individuals in families are homeless nightly, comprising 30% of the total homeless population. Shelter is available for 560 of these individuals in families. Again applying this survey's findings that the average homeless family in Salem or Eugene consists of 3.95 individuals (including 2.53 children), one finds 236 families homeless nightly—nearly four times the number in Salem—with 597 children.

A total of 78 homeless parents were interviewed from Salem and Eugene, comprising 10% of the national sample. Thirty-five of the families were drawn from Salem, 40 from Eugene, and 3 from Springfield (outside Eugene). These families contain a total of 244 children, including 189 in shelter, 33 in alternate care, and 22 over age 18. Surveys were conducted with parents residing in 10 different facilities, offering combinations of emergency, transitional and supportive housing. One of these also provides drop-in daycare for children in homeless families. Two of these function as domestic violence shelters, providing 10% of the Oregon survey sample.

Homeless parents in Salem and Eugene are more representative of the general population in these cities than was found in the other cities studied. The most significant differences are in employment and income, with half as-many homeless parents employed as non-homeless adults, and median annual incomes 45% of the regional median. While homeless parents over 25 and of all ages are less likely to have graduated from high school or have earned a GED than the general population, this difference is more slight relative to the general population in Salem and more dramatic relative to the population in Eugene, where graduation rates among the general population differ by 8%.

Basic demographics among homeless families in Salem and Eugene differ significantly from those among the aggregate homeless population, reflective in many ways of differences between the general population in this region and national statistics. Out of the ten cities studied, Salem and Eugene have the lowest percent of African Americans in their homeless population (3%), and the highest of whites (78%). Yet whites in Salem and Eugene are, as in the aggregate, under-represented in the homeless population. The balance is drawn from the Latino population, which at 13% among homeless parents is more than double the 6% and 3% rates in Salem and Eugene's general population respectively. It is interesting to note that while only 3% of the homeless are African American, this is still an over-representation of the 2% and 1% in the general community. Parents in Salem and Eugene are more than twice as likely to be married as homeless parents nationally, and more likely to have completed high school or earned a GED. Their children also tend to be older, with only 30% under the age of 5. Oregon families are, however, more likely to be homeless for the second time or more. Finally, homeless families in Salem and Eugene are significantly less likely to have been living doubled-up with friends or family before entering the shelters (23% compared to 44% nationally), although prior living arrangements are unknown as 21% cited other, unspecified living situations.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in Salem and Eugene, Oregon:

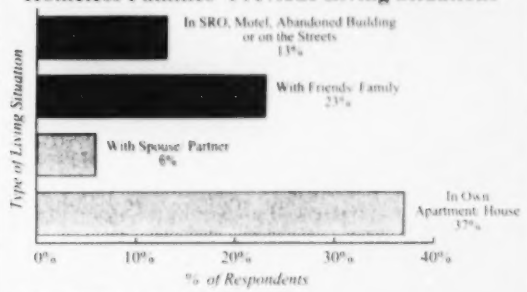
City of Salem Department of Community Development, *Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan, 1995-2000* (Salem, OR: 1995).
Lane County, "1997 HUD Blue Ribbon Best Practice Continuum of Care." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (Eugene, OR: 1997).

Salem and Eugene Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*		
Parents Surveyed	78	**Pop. of Salem**		114,912
		Pop. of Eugene		118,122
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**		
Female	91%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
Male	9%	Female	24%	21%
		Male	76%	79%
Median Parent Age	31	**Median Parent Age**		NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**		
African American	3%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
Asian	0%	Af. Am.	2%	1%
Latino	13%	Asian	2%	4%
Native American	5%	Latino	6%	3%
White	78%	Nat. Amer.	2%	1%
Other	1%	White	88%	91%
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**		
Married	42%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
Single	58%	Married	70%	73%
Never Married	*25%*	Single	30%	27%
Sep./Div./Wid.	*33%*	*Never Married*	*NA*	
		Sep./Div./Wid.	*NA*	
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**		
Less than High School	22%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
High School or More	78%	< H.S.	18%	11%
		H.S. +	82%	89%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**		
Employed	27%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
Unemployed	73%	Employed	55%	58%
		Unempl.	45%	42%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$11,440	**Median Annual Household Income**		
		Salem		$25,236
Age of Children in Shelter		Eugene		$25,369
Under 5	30%	**Age of Children in Metro Areas**		
5 - 17	70%		*Salem*	*Eugene*
		Under 5	32%	28%
Number of Children Per Family		5 - 17	68%	72%
1	15%	**Number of Children Per Family**		NA
2	30%			
3	22%			
≥ 4	33%			

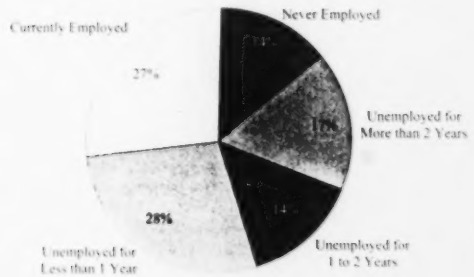
* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the cities of Salem or Eugene.

Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*

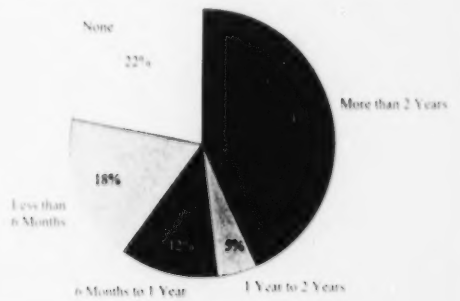


* An additional 21% lived in other unspecified situations

Homeless Parents' Employment Histories



Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	42%
	Two Times	33%
	Three or More Times	25%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 29)*	< 18	10%
	18 - 25	30%
	26 - 30	23%
	> 30	37%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		62%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 8 months)*	< 1 month	9%
	1 month - 6 months	63%
	6 months - 1 year	4%
	> 1 year	24%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	21%
	Disagreement	23%
	Domestic Violence	17%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	13%
	Lost Public Assistance	5%
	Lost Job	17%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	22%
	$150 - $250	52%
	$250 - $350	16%
	> $350	10%
Parents Currently Pregnant		8%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	18%
	18 - 25	70%
	25 - 30	8%
	> 30	4%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	88%
	With Other Parent	5%
	With Relative	3%
	Kinship or Foster Care	2%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	1%
	On Own	0%
	Other	1%

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Local Data • San Antonio, Texas

San Antonio is the ninth largest city in the country, and part of the 36th largest metropolitan area, with a population approaching 1.5 million. The area's unemployment rate, 3.9%, is beneath the national 5% rate. The poverty rate among families there, however, is nearly double that of families across the country at 18.7%. Median rents in San Antonio run to $369—25% of income among renters, but 45% of the median income among homeless families.

Other than one city-run shelter, homeless services in San Antonio are entirely provided by the nonprofit sector. The San Antonio Area Homeless Action Coalition (SAAHAC) brings together public and private agencies, service providers, and homeless and formerly homeless individuals to guide service development and planning in the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. Six shelters provide emergency and transitional housing for homeless families and individuals in San Antonio. An extensive network and referral system links homeless individuals and families with needed services.

An estimated 820 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter daily in San Antonio, comprising 42% of the daily homeless population. Shelter is currently available to accommodate 499 of these individuals in families. Based on this survey's findings that the average homeless family in San Antonio is made up of 3.29 people (with 2.09 children), an estimated 249 families are homeless every day in the city, including 520 children.

63 homeless parents in San Antonio participated in this research, comprising 8% of the national sample. These families are composed of 141 children, including 112 children in shelter, 20 in alternate care, and 9 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from nine different providers of shelter and/or services to the City of San Antonio, including four transitional shelters; three outreach agencies; one provider of counseling to families in shelter; and one provider of aftercare to recently homeless families.

Homeless families in San Antonio differ from the general population there in the same ways that homeless families in each of the ten cities differ from their respective general populations: homeless parents in San Antonio are more likely to be female than individuals in the general population, more likely to be African American, and more likely to be single. Homeless parents are less likely to have completed high school or be currently employed, and earn a median annual income in current or previous work only 42% that of the regional median. Homeless parents also have more young children than found in the general population, with 47% of children in shelter under age 5, compared to 29% locally.

The demographics of homeless families in San Antonio almost precisely mirror those of homeless families in the aggregate, with few exceptions. Parents in San Antonio are barely younger as a group than the aggregate with a median age of 27 compared to the national median of 29. San Antonio families also are less likely to be large, with only 11% having four or more children compared to 23% in the aggregate. San Antonio's families seem to be worse off economically, however. The median annual income among homeless parents is only 86% of the aggregate median, with only 16% of families earning over $250 per week in current or previous employment, compared to 34% in the aggregate. (At the same time, median annual income among San Antonio's general population is only 69% of the national median.) While only 12% of homeless parents overall indicated that they were forced to leave their last residence because they lost their job, that rate rises to 21% in San Antonio. Yet while more people may be homeless in San Antonio because they lost jobs, fewer people have ever worked, with 44% never having worked compared to 28% of homeless parents nationally.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in San Antonio, Texas:

City of San Antonio and Bexar County. "Continuum of Care Narrative." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (San Antonio, TX: 1997).
U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 1997* (Washington, DC: 1997).

San Antonio Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	63	**Pop. of San Antonio**	998,905
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	95%	Female	24%
Male	5%	Male	76%
Median Parent Age	27	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	19%	African American	7%
Asian	0%	Asian	1%
Latino	49%	Latino	56%
Native American	3%	Native American	<1%
White	26%	White	36%
Other	3%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	20%	Married	72%
Single	80%	Single	28%
Never Married	*40%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*40%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	37%	Less than High School	31%
High School or More	63%	High School or More	69%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	13%	Employed	55%
Unemployed	87%	Unemployed	45%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$9,880	**Median Annual Household Income**	$23,584
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	47%	Under 5	29%
5 - 17	53%	5 - 17	71%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	33%		
2	26%		
3	30%		
≥ 4	11%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the City of San Antonio.

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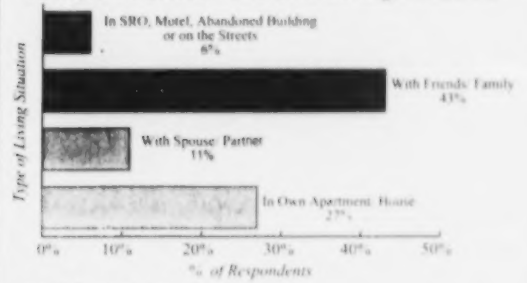
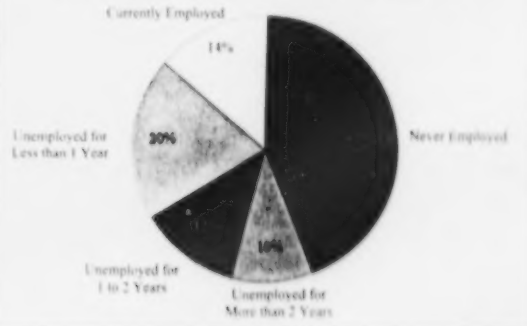
Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*

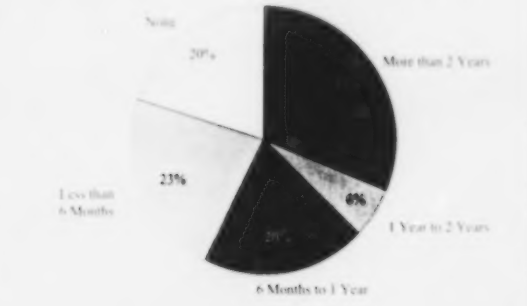


* An additional 13% lived in other unspecified situations

Homeless Parents' Employment Histories



Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	60%
	Two Times	30%
	Three or More Times	10%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 26)*	< 18	10%
	18 - 25	33%
	26 - 30	30%
	> 30	27%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		46%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 12 months)*	< 1 month	3%
	1 month - 6 months	38%
	6 months - 1 year	33%
	> 1 year	26%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	26%
	Disagreement	32%
	Domestic Violence	27%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	5%
	Lost Public Assistance	5%
	Lost Job	21%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	26%
	$150 - $250	58%
	$250 - $350	10%
	> $350	6%
Parents Currently Pregnant		8%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	22%
	18 - 25	67%
	25 - 30	10%
	> 30	1%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	87%
	With Other Parent	7%
	With Relative	5%
	Kinship or Foster Care	0%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	1%
	On Own	0%
	Other	0%

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Local Data • San Francisco, California

San Francisco is the twelfth largest city in the United States, comprising a metropolitan region of over 1.6 million. The unemployment rate at 3.2% in San Francisco is the lowest among the ten cities studied. The poverty rate among families is precisely that of the country as a whole at 10%. Median rent, on the other hand, is the highest among the ten cities at $653, commanding 28% of renter income, and 56% of income reported by homeless families.

Homeless services in San Francisco are centrally organized, primarily through the Department of Human Services (DHS). The majority of the city's shelter system is funded through the City itself, but operated by nonprofit agencies. The rest are independently funded by nonprofit religious groups. DHS operates Connecting Point, a centralized intake center for all families seeking access to emergency housing and services. Eight emergency shelters provide 246 beds for individuals in families, and multiple transitional facilities maintain 405 beds for homeless families.

2,805 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional housing on a daily basis in San Francisco, comprising 37% of the City's homeless population. Applying to the city's official number of homeless individuals in families to this survey's finding that the average family in shelter in San Francisco consists of 3.08 people (with 1.88 children), an estimated 911 families seek shelter every day, including 1,713 children. Accommodation is available for 23% of these individuals in families.

50 homeless parents in San Francisco were interviewed for this study—6% of the national sample. These families include 128 children—80 in shelter, 40 in alternate care, and 8 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from 3 emergency and transitional shelters, as well as the city's central intake unit.

Homeless families in San Francisco are not representative of the city's general population. Demographic trends and relative differences in comparison with the general population are similar to findings in each of the other nine cities studied. Homeless parents are more likely to be female than the general population, more likely to be African American, and more likely to be single. They also are less likely to have completed school, and more likely to be unemployed. The median annual income in current or previous employment among homeless parents is only 42% the regional median. Interestingly, Asians, who comprise 29% of the general population are significantly under-represented among the homeless at only 6%.

Among the ten cities, San Francisco maintains the highest rate of male heads-of-household in family shelters at 12%. The median age of parents in San Francisco is the highest at 35. San Francisco parents also were likely to be older when they first had children, with 37% over 25, compared to 16% in the aggregate. Children in San Francisco shelters tend to be older than those in the aggregate, with only 31% under age 5 compared to 47% nationally. Yet San Francisco parents are the most likely among the ten cities to have children in alternate care outside of the shelters, with 12% staying with relatives, and another 14% in foster or kinship care. Annual median income among homeless families in current or previous employment is dramatically higher in San Francisco at 123% the median among homeless families in the aggregate, even though median income in the general population there is only 98% of the median nationwide. Yet despite this high income level, only 6% of parents in San Francisco, compared to 19% in the aggregate, have never received TANF, and 42% have been on welfare for over two years, compared to 35% in the aggregate. San Francisco families are more likely than families in the aggregate to be homeless for at least the second time, with 63% returning to the shelters for at least the second time compared to 37% nationally. Finally, families in San Francisco are less likely than families elsewhere either to have been living doubled-up or to have been living in their own home prior to entering the shelter system. Instead, 19% reported living in an SRO or motel just prior to coming to the shelters, the highest rate of dependence on this form of shelter within the ten cities, followed most closely by 7% of families in Norman, Oklahoma.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in San Francisco, California:

City and County of San Francisco. "Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Application." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (San Francisco, CA: 1997).

U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 1997* (Washington, DC: 1997).

San Francisco Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Families		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	50	**Pop. of San Francisco**	734,676
Head-of-Household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	88%	Female	22%
Male	12%	Male	78%
Median Parent Age	35	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	48%	African American	11%
Asian	6%	Asian	29%
Latino	12%	Latino	14%
Native American	2%	Native American	1%
White	24%	White	45%
Other	8%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	20%	Married	73%
Single	80%	Single	27%
Never Married	*55%*	*Never Married*	*NA*
Sep./Div./Wid.	*25%*	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	*NA*
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	31%	Less than High School	22%
High School or More	69%	High School or More	78%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	19%	Employed	61%
Unemployed	81%	Unemployed	39%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$14,105	**Median Annual Household Income**	$33,414
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	31%	Under 5	30%
5 - 17	69%	5 - 17	70%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	33%		
2	22%		
3	25%		
≥ 4	20%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of San Francisco.

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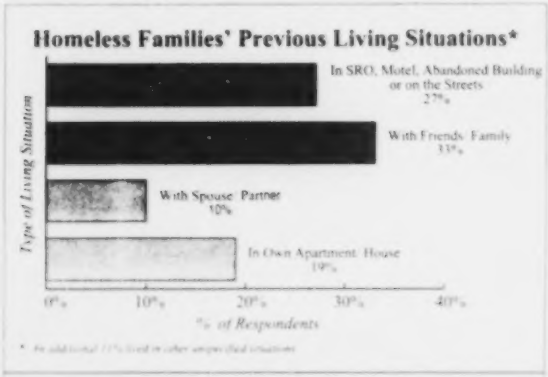

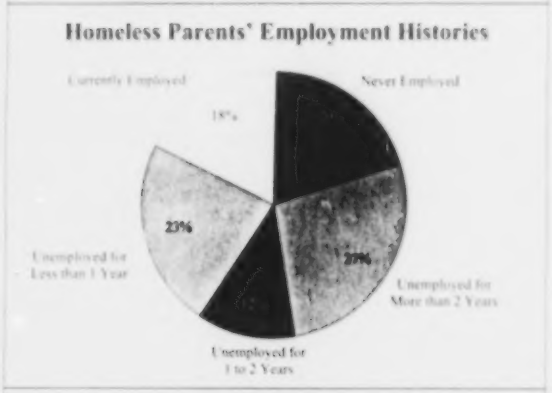

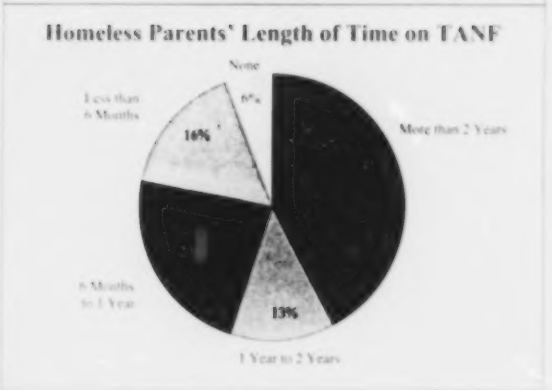

Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	37%
	Two Times	47%
	Three or More Times	16%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 30)*	< 18	14%
	18 - 25	23%
	26 - 30	19%
	> 30	44%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		56%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 7 months)*	< 1 month	6%
	1 month - 6 months	57%
	6 months - 1 year	27%
	> 1 year	10%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	10%
	Disagreement	27%
	Domestic Violence	17%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	10%
	Lost Public Assistance	6%
	Lost Job	6%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	13%
	$150 - $250	33%
	$250 - $350	33%
	> $350	21%
Parents Currently Pregnant		15%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	21%
	18 - 25	43%
	25 - 30	15%
	> 30	21%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	69%
	With Other Parent	3%
	With Relative	12%
	Kinship or Foster Care	14%
	In Institution	<1%
	With Adopted Family	0%
	On Own	<1%
	Other	0%

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Local Data • South Bend, Indiana

South Bend is the second smallest city included in this study, with a population of approximately 105,000. The population of its greater metropolitan region, 258,000, is only 4% the size of New York City, the largest city included in this project. The unemployment rate in the South Bend area, 3.6%, is below the national rate at 5%. The city's poverty rate among families, 11.2%, is only slightly higher than the national rate. Median rent in South Bend amounts to $410—26% of renter income, and 46% of the median income among homeless families.

Services and shelter for the homeless in South Bend are a community-wide project, with collaboration from nonprofit agencies, government representatives, the religious community, private business, and the University of Notre Dame. Three facilities offer shelter to homeless families in the city of South Bend and St. Joseph County, and one offers shelter to families escaping abusive situations. By far the largest shelter in the area, serving both families and single adults, is the Center for the Homeless, a collaborative project supported by the University of Notre Dame, the City of South Bend, the United Religious Community and the Junior League of America.

An estimated 210 individuals in families are in need of emergency or transitional shelter on a given day, comprising 43% of the daily homeless population in South Bend. Shelter is currently available for 134 of these individuals in families. Applying this survey's findings that the average homeless family in South Bend is composed of 3.43 individuals (with 2.29 children), an estimated 61 families are homeless at a time in South Bend, including 140 children.

21 parents in homeless families in South Bend participated in this study, making up 3% of the national sample. These parents families are comprised of 59 children, including 45 in shelter, 10 in alternate care, and 4 over the age of 18. Families were drawn from a total of two emergency and transitional housing facilities (90% from one).

As in other cities, the demographics of homeless families in South Bend do not reflect those of the general population in the area. Homeless families are twice as likely to be African American, 7% less likely to have completed school, and half as likely to be currently employed. Median annual income in current or previous employment among homeless families is only 45% of the regional median.

Basic demographics among homeless parents in South Bend are similar to demographics among homeless parents nationally. South Bend parents are slightly more likely to be employed, at 29% compared to the national 21%. Median incomes among homeless parents in South Bend are 95% of the aggregate median, despite the fact that the local median for the general population in South Bend is only 71% of the national median. Disparities are more apparent in underlying personal histories. Parents in South Bend are more likely to be homeless for the third time or more than parents in the aggregate, at 24% returning to the shelters for the third time compared to 14% nationally. South Bend parents also are less likely to have been teenage parents, with only 14% giving birth to their first child before turning 18, compared to 24% in the aggregate. Perhaps one of the most significant differences is in housing histories. While only 57% of homeless parents in the aggregate have lived in their own home, that number rises to 71% in South Bend. Yet at the same time, South Bend families are *more* likely to have been living doubled-up before coming to the shelters (60%) than families in the aggregate (44%). South Bend parents are far more likely to have at least some employment experience than homeless parents nationally, only 4% never having worked compared to 28% nationally. Yet they also are likely to have been unemployed for longer periods of time, with 29% unemployed for over two years and 24% unemployed for one to two years, compared to 12% and 14% in each group respectively within the aggregate. Finally, South Bend parents have spent less time overall on TANF, with 67% of parents having received welfare either for under one year or never, compared to 53% in the aggregate.

Additional Resources on Family Homelessness in South Bend, Indiana:

Riley, L.A. and Nyce, L.D. *Homelessness In Our Midst: An Evaluation and Demographic Profile of the Center for the Homeless, South Bend, Indiana.* Unpublished paper. Department of Sociology. University of Notre Dame (South Bend, IN: 1995).

St. Joseph County. "St. Joseph County Continuum of Care." Report to U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (South Bend, IN: 1997).

South Bend Demographics: Homeless Families vs. General Population

Homeless Parents		General Population*	
Parents Surveyed	21	**Pop. of South Bend**	105,083
Head-of-household Gender		**Head-of-Household Gender**	
Female	100%	Female	29%
Male	0%	Male	71%
Median Parent Age	31	**Median Parent Age**	NA
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	52%	African American	21%
Asian	5%	Asian	1%
Latino	0%	Latino	3%
Native American	5%	Native American	<1%
White	38%	White	75%
Other	0%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	14%	Married	66%
Single	86%	Single	34%
Never Married	43%	*Never Married*	NA
Sep./Div./Wid.	43%	*Sep./Div./Wid.*	NA
Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)		**Education Level (for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	35%	Less than High School	28%
High School or More	65%	High School or More	72%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	29%	Employed	57%
Unemployed	71%	Unemployed	43%
Median Annual Household Income (Current/Previous Employment)	$10,816	**Median Annual Household Income**	$24,131
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children in Metro Area**	
Under 5	49%	Under 5	31%
5 - 17	51%	5 - 17	69%
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**	NA
1	29%		
2	24%		
3	28%		
≥ 4	19%		

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures given for general population represent individuals in the city of South Bend.

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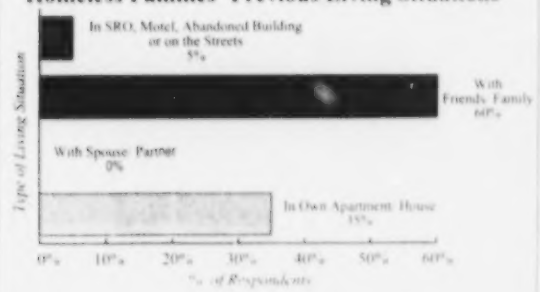
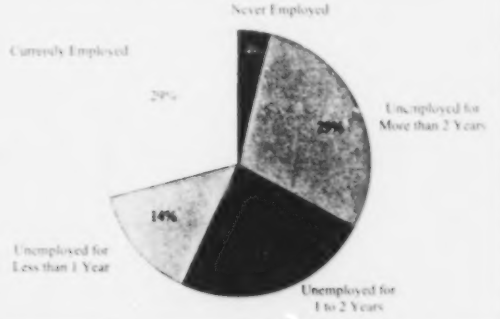
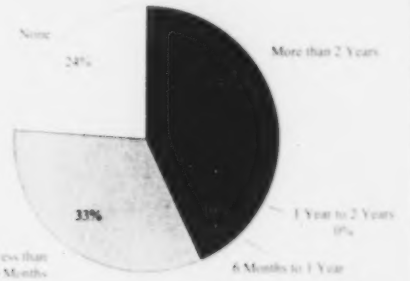
Homeless Families' Previous Living Situations*



Homeless Parents' Employment Histories



Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Number of Times Homeless (Including Current)	One Time	62%
	Two Times	14%
	Three or More Times	24%
Age When First Homeless *(Median: 29)*	< 18	5%
	18 - 25	33%
	26 - 30	19%
	> 30	43%
Leased or Owned Own Residence at Some Point in the Past		71%
How Long Since Left Last Residence *(Mean: 8 months)*	< 1 month	30%
	1 month - 6 months	35%
	6 months - 1 year	25%
	> 1 year	10%
Why Left Last Residence	Overcrowded	10%
	Disagreement	33%
	Domestic Violence	14%
	Substandard/ Housing Disaster	10%
	Lost Public Assistance	0%
	Lost Job	10%
Weekly Earnings in Current or Previous Employment	< $150	20%
	$150 - $250	45%
	$250 - $350	20%
	> $350	15%
Parents Currently Pregnant		10%
Age of Parents at Birth of First Child	<18	14%
	18 - 25	71%
	25 - 30	10%
	> 30	5%
Location of Children Under 18	With Parent in Shelter	82%
	With Other Parent	7%
	With Relative	7%
	Kinship or Foster Care	2%
	In Institution	0%
	With Adopted Family	2%
	On Own	0%
	Other	0%

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Welfare and Reform: A Future of Homelessness

National Demographics*

Homeless Families		Families on Welfare		General Population	
Families Surveyed	777	**Families Nationally**	4,869,000	**Families with Children**	34,296,000
Families Receiving TANF	59%	**Families Receiving TANF**	100%	**Families Receiving TANF**	14%
Parent Age		**Mother Age**			
< 20	7%	< 20	6%		NA
20 - 24	23%	20 - 24	25%		
25 - 29	22%	25 - 29	23%		
30 - 39	36%	30 - 39	35%		
≥ 40	12%	≥ 40	12%		
15 - 24	30%		NA	**Parent Age**	
25 - 34	43%			15 - 24	6%
35 - 44	24%			25 - 34	31%
≥ 45	3%			35 - 44	44%
				≥ 45	19%
Race/ Ethnicity		**Race/ Ethnicity**		**Race/ Ethnicity**	
African American	58%	African American	36%	African American	12%
Asian	1%	Asian	3%	Asian	3%
Latino	15%	Latino	20%	Latino	10%
Native American	2%	Native American	1%	Native American	<1%
White	22%	White	37%	White	74%
Other	2%	Other	2%		
Marital Status of Parents		**Marital Status of Parents**		**Marital Status of Parents**	
Married	19%	Married	10%	Married	74%
Single	81%	Single	90%	Single	26%
Education Level (for All Parents)		**Education Level (for All Mothers)**		**Education Level (for All Parents or Mothers)**	NA
Less than High School	37%	Less than High School	41%		
High School or More	63%	High School or More	59%		
(for Persons 25 and Over)		**(for Persons 25 and Over)**		**(for Persons 25 and Over)**	
Less than High School	32%		NA	Less than High School	25%
High School or More	68%			High School or More	75%
Employment (for Women 16 and Over)		**Employment (for all Mothers)**		**Employment (for Women 16 and Over)**	
Employed	21%	Employed	8%	Employed	59%
Unemployed	79%	Unemployed	92%	Unemployed	41%
Age of Children in Shelter		**Age of Children on TANF**		**Age of Children in U.S.**	
Under 5	47%	Under 5	NA	Under 5	28%
5 - 17	53%	5 - 17	NA	5 - 17	72%
Under 6	51%	Under 6	46%	Under 6	NA
6 - 17	49%	6 - 17	54%	6 - 17	NA
Number of Children Per Family		**Number of Children Per Family**		**Number of Children Per Family**	
1	26%	1	43%	1	41%
2	28%	2	30%	2	39%
3	23%	3	16%	3	14%
≥ 4	23%	≥ 4	10%	≥ 4	6%

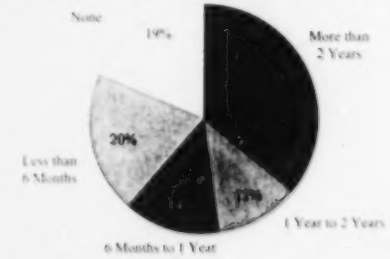
*Multiple citations are provided where necessary to facilitate comparisons between available data on homeless families, families on welfare and the general population.

Homeless parents are far more representative of parents on welfare—the closest indicator available for families in poverty—than the general population across the country. The demographics of homeless parents approach those of families on welfare in marital status, employment and age of children, and match precisely in parent age. Two differences remain: African Americans still comprise a greater percentage of homeless families than families on welfare, and homeless families tend to be larger.

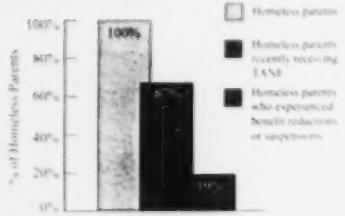
59% of homeless parents currently receive TANF. An additional 8% of families do not currently receive TANF but experienced reductions in public assistance within the six months prior to their interview, indicating that their benefits had been cut off entirely. In fact, a total of 29% of all parents who ever received TANF had experienced a reduction in or elimination of public assistance within the six months prior to be interviewed for this study. While 22% of these parents reported finding work as a result, they earned a median annual income of only $9,250—69% of the poverty level for a family of three. Another 49% said they became homeless as a result of their public assistance cuts.

It is too early to say what ultimate impact welfare reform will have on family homelessness, though 90% of the 30 facilities who responded to this question reported seeing an increase in family homelessness in the six months prior to this research. Annual editions of this report will monitor the relationship between welfare reform and family homelessness in the United States.

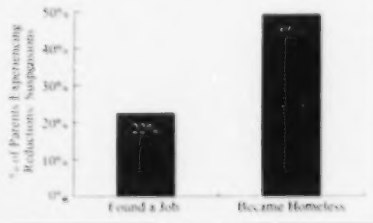
Homeless Parents' Length of Time on TANF



Benefit Reductions/ Suspensions Among TANF Recipients


100%
Homeless parents
Homeless parents recently receiving TANF
Homeless parents who experienced benefit reductions or suspensions

Results of TANF Benefit Reductions/ Suspensions



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Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions are provided to clarify in-text discussion, as well as limitations of statistical comparisons between homeless families and the general population. Many of these definitions can and should be read as footnotes to the tables and charts presented in this report.

AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children): AFDC, often referred to simply as "welfare"—is a federal program that provides families with a monthly check based on family-size and income. AFDC was replaced in 1996 by the new Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). To avoid confusion, discussion of families' history of welfare receipt refers to welfare as TANF, although families on welfare before 1996 actually received AFDC.

Centralized Shelter System: A centralized shelter system is one in which coordination and oversight is maintained by a single agency or coalition, often with a single office or hotline by which to access shelter ("centralized intake").

City: Usage of the term "city" in the context of "10 cities" does not refer always to a city center through its technical boundaries. Two of the "cities" included here—Dallas Fort Worth, as well as Atlanta (with which data from Decatur and Marietta are included)—actually are metropolitan areas. One other—Salem and Eugene—is actually two distinct cities (with their own unconnected metropolitan areas) within the same region. In-text usage of the term "city" in reference to statistics does refer to the city proper.

Emergency Shelter: The majority of emergency shelters offer individuals or families a place to stay for a few days to a few weeks until they find alternate accommodation.

Employment: Employment among women in the general population refers to "female labor participation rates," or the percentage of women in the work force. This percentage, by the census bureau's definition of "work force," also includes women who are either currently working, or actively looking for work. Employment among homeless families here means females who are currently working versus those who are not currently working. Thus, it is likely that fewer women in the general population would be defined as "Employed" were one to apply the same definition as used for homeless parents.

Head-of-Household Gender: Among homeless families, "head-of- household gender" refers to the gender of the parent surveyed. Among the general population, statistics for head-of-household gender represent the percentage of families with children headed by women (no men present) versus two-parent or male-headed families.

High School Attainment: "High School Attainment" for the homeless and general population includes matriculation from four years of high school or attainment of a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Information is not available to determine what proportion of either population earned a GED, as opposed to completing high school.

Homeless Family: Homeless families are here defined as adults with children under 18 present with them in shelter, or pregnant women in shelter. The definition of homeless families frequently extends to families moving between doubled-up housing situations who have not yet entered the shelters, and adults in shelter who have left children in the care of friend, relative, or foster care parent. The restraints on the scope of this research, however, necessitated an abridged definition.

Institution: Children's residence in "institutions" refers to residence in a group home, mental health facility, or residential substance abuse treatment program.

Married: Marriage among homeless parents here includes common law marriage.

Metropolitan Area: Metropolitan Area refers to a Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the census bureau, which includes a larger city surrounded by smaller cities or towns whose economies and populations are interdependent. A Comprehensive Metropolitan Area is two or more Metropolitan Statistical Areas that together form an interdependent economic community.

NA: "NA" denotes comparative data that is not available.

Number of Homeless Families: The numbers of homeless families in each city studied refer to numbers needing or residing in emergency or transitional housing in each city, as estimated in the continuum of care application for the city. Numbers in or needing supportive/permanent housing could not be used due to variation in definition between cities. Calculations were occasionally necessary to provide data comparable between cities.

Race/ Ethnicity: Census data refers to "Latino" by individual or ancestral point of origin, not by race. Thus, Latino persons in every city may be of any race, with the exception of Norman, Oklahoma. Information for the general (as opposed to homeless) population in Norman is available only by race, without regard for origin.

Supportive Services: Any service contributing to the well-being of individuals or families, including healthcare; food provision; family, domestic violence, mental health or substance abuse counseling; housing placement; parent or child education; job training or placement.

TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families): TANF replaced AFDC in 1996, transferring welfare program decisions to the state level and implementing new work requirements and time limits. Federal monies for TANF may not go toward providing welfare payments to families for longer than five years (although up to 20% of families may be exempted from this time limit).

Transitional Shelter or Housing: Most transitional facilities offer longer-term shelter for families—from a month to over a year—until they find permanent housing. Support services such as counseling, housing placement or education programs frequently are provided on site or via referral to assist residents in their move to stability.

Why Left Last Residence: Respondents could give multiple reasons for leaving last residence. Therefore, percentages do not add to 100.

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Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data on local and national demographics, as well as welfare indicators and information about local homeless service systems, represents the best comparative information available on families in the ten cities. The following is a list of sources relied upon for these statistics.

Metropolitan Area Population & Rank: 1995 data
George E. Hall and Deirdre A. Gaquin (eds.), *1997 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City, and County Data Book* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1997) Table C.

City Population and Rank: 1994 data
George E. Hall and Deirdre A. Gaquin (eds.), *1997 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City, and County Data Book* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1997) Table D.

Head-of-Household Gender: 1990 data
U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County and City Data Book: 1994* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994) Table C. • Dallas/Fort Worth data: ibid, Table B. • National data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997) Table 68.

Parent Age: 1995 data
U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997) Table 80.

Race/Ethnicity: 1990 data
U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997) Table 46. • National data: ibid, Table 22. • Norman data: George E. Hall and Deirdre A. Gaquin (eds.), *1997 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City, and County Data Book* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1997) Table D.

Marital Status of Parents: 1990 data
Center for Urban Policy Research, *State of the Nation's Cities: America's Changing Urban Life* (Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996) Table D17. • Dallas/Fort Worth data: ibid, Tables D2, D16, D17. • National data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997) Table 68. • Norman, Salem, Eugene and South Bend data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County and City Data Book: 1994* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994) Table C.

Education: 1990 data
George E. Hall and Deirdre A. Gaquin (eds.), *1997 County and City Extra: Annual Metro, City, and County Data Book* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1997) Table D. • Dallas/Fort Worth data: ibid, Table C.

Female Employment: 1990 data
U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County and City Data Book: 1994* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994) Table C. • Dallas/Fort Worth data: ibid, Table B. • National (1996) data: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997) Table 626.

Median Annual Household Income: 1989 data
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Partners in Ten Cities

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Ten Cities:
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1997-1998

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